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AUBREY:

A NOVEL.

By R. C. DALLAS, Esq.

AUTHOR OF PERCIVAL.

Sweet are the uses of Adversity. SHAKSPEARE.

That misery does not make all virtuous, experience too clearly informs us; but it is no less certain that, of what virtue there is, misery produces the far greater part. JOHNSON.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. N. LONGMAN AND O. REES,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1804.

PR
4525 641461
31.8.56
D146A8
V.2

Printed by A. Strahan,
Printers-Street.

CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

CHAPTER XIII.

However obſcure the Ways of Providence, a ſound Mind naturally endeavours to trace them, - - Page 1

CHAPTER XIV.

The Family unanimous reſpecting Mariton. A benevolent Exertion in an old Acquaintance. Pious Reſolutions. More of Mr. Cowper, 22

CHAPTER XV.

A Country Youth. Danger of the firſt Step in Vice. A Word for brown Complexions, and another for fair ones, - - - 45

CHAPTER XVI.

Conticuere omnes. Commencement of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory, - - 60

CHAP.

CHAPTER XVII.

Continuation of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory, Page 83

CHAPTER XVIII.

Continuation of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory, 116

CHAPTER XIX.

Continuation of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory, 139

CHAPTER XX.

The Danger of unguided Benevolence. An Effort of cautious Generoſity, - 150

CHAPTER XXI.

Continuation of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory, 174

CHAPTER XXII.

Continuation of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory, 198

CHAPTER XXIII.

Continuation of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory, 235

CHAPTER XXIV.

Continuation of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory, 258

AU-

AUBREY.

CHAPTER XIII.

However obſcure the Ways of Providence, a ſound Mind naturally endeavours to trace them.

THE converſation of a pure and open-hearted youth, and the arrangement for diſpoſing of his pictures, had drawn off Aubrey's attention from the mortifications he had received: but, ſcarcely had he parted with Senſitive, when the recollection of them revived his diſguſt at the world, heated his fancy with images of new inſults, and again directed his wiſhes to Mariton and a country life.

He was, however, unwilling to plant ſtings in the heart of the woman he loved; and he therefore reſumed all the chearfulneſs he could as he entered his houſe, met his family with ſmiles, talked of the hopes he had conceived from his interview with Mr. Flouriſh, and gave Cæſar directions for the removal of the pictures in the morning.

In ſpite of his efforts to preſerve a gaiety of countenance, he frequently caught himſelf in a reverie, and he obſerved a gloom on every face, of which he ſuſpected his own dejection to be the cauſe. He dined alone with his family; and afterwards had recourſe with ſucceſs to their muſical talents to recover his ſpirits: they played, ſung, danced, forgot the world, and were happy.

The next morning the pictures were removed to Mr. Flouriſh's; and Aubrey ſpent the forenoon in examining them,

and

and placing them in the beſt lights, according to the ſubjects. In this he followed his own judgment; for both his friend Senſitive and Mr. Flouriſh were otherwiſe engaged; and, as for applying to any other connoiſſeur, Sir Kit Keeping's bread and cheeſe ſtill ſtuck in his throat, and prevented him: beſides, he was himſelf ſufficiently ſkilled in light and ſhade to conduct this work, and he took pleaſure in ſuperintending it. When the paintings were all properly diſpoſed, he paraded ſome time before them, ſurveying with pride and hope the means that were to ſuſpend the fall of his family; and then returned to Albemarle-ſtreet, to dreſs before dinner, at which he expected company.

At his door he found Cæſar arguing againſt the importunity of ſeveral tradeſmen, who were inſiſting on ſeeing his maſter. This was another new ſitua-

tion: his heart received and ejected the ſtream of life with violence. He entered the parlour, and deſired they would follow him. He expreſſed his ſurpriſe at their impatience; and, at the ſame time, acknowledging the juſtneſs of their demands, ſaid he was ſorry to poſtpone the payment of them, not having by him the ſum to which they amounted, but that they might depend upon having their accounts ſettled ſhortly. He was requeſted by one of them to ſpecify the time. "In a week or ten days," ſaid Aubrey; "perhaps it may be a fort-"night."—"Why! to be ſure, ſir," ſaid Mr. Prim the upholſterer, "a fort-"night is no time; but I have paſſed "my word to make a large payment by "the eighteenth, which is the begin-"ning of the week, and I ſhall be put "to my trumps to do it. I have no "objection to a draft on a banker at

"fourteen

" fourteen days date; for it will anſwer " my purpoſe juſt as well as money."— " I have no objections to the ſame," was echoed by the other tradeſmen.

Aubrey, unaccuſtomed to putting off demands, and above ſhuffling, was at firſt at a loſs what to ſay; but, truſting to the force of candour, he replied, that it was impoſſible. " Gentlemen," ſaid he, " I have at preſent no banker to " draw upon. I ſee that, aware of " the ſituation into which I have been " unexpectedly thrown, you are alarmed " for your money: now, be aſſured, that " the injury and unhappineſs of non- " payment would be infinitely more to me " than to you. Feeling this, I am juſt " now returned from tranſacting ſome " buſineſs, by which a fund is to be pro- " vided for the ſettlement of my affairs. " I can do nothing more than repeat " what I have ſaid; and, conſidering

" the moneys you have formerly re-
" ceived, I think it ſhould ſatisfy you."
—" Why! to be ſure," anſwered Mr.
Prim, who ſeemed to be the orator of
the group, " you ſpeak like a gentle-
" man, Mr. Aubrey; and you can't
" wonder that, in theſe times, men in
" buſineſs ſhould look about them: but,
" as I ſaid before, a fortnight's no time;
" ſo, for my part, ſeeing you promiſe
" ſo fairly, I will manage to make up
" my money ſome other way."—" I
" have no objections," ſaid Mr. Pruin
the grocer, " to following Mr. Prim's
" example; for I knows Mr. Prim to
" be a prudent man: but I muſt ſay
" that, though I thinks Mr. Aubrey is
" one of the moſt well-ſpoken gentlemen
" I know, it is going too far to our faces
" to tell us, that if he ſhould not pay,
" us, he would be the moſt injured and
" unhappy perſon." — " Pho!" cried
Mr.

Mr. Prim, interrupting him, "how "can you, Mr. Pruin, expoſe ſuch a "want of education! Don't you know "what ſentiment is? It is the way gen- "tlemen feel. What Mr. Aubrey ſaid "in that regard was only ſentiment, not "real; only honour, not hard caſh."— "Oh! I underſtand now," ſaid Pruin. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Aubrey; I "have no objection, ſir, to wait. I "hope Mrs. Aubrey and all your good "family are well, ſir." The other perſons conſented to wait likewiſe, and made ſimilar inquiries; for which he thanked them, and they went away.

A ſcene ſtill more mortifying awaited him up ſtairs. Paſſing towards his dreſſing-room he heard a violent ſcuffle in the apartment which, on the family's coming to the houſe, had been devoted to ſtudy. He flew to the door, and, as he opened it, ſaw his ſon Arthur ward a

blow made at him by his tutor, Mr. Williams, and return one that felled him to the ground. "Good Heaven! "what do I see!" exclaimed Aubrey; "what can this mean?" Arthur stood confounded at seeing his father; the tutor lay motionless on the floor; Aubrey endeavoured in vain to raise him. Alarmed lest the blow were fatal, he rang the bell, intending to send for a surgeon; but, before Cæsar came up, the tutor began to stir. Arthur had struck him on the temple and stunned him, but had done him no greater injury: he soon recovered his senses; and, being desired by Aubrey to account for the indecent act, to the last part of which he had been a witness, took his hat, and said he should leave his son to account for it. "That I am ready to "do, sir," said Arthur; "but, with "my father's leave, I shall keep you to

"hear

" hear my account." Saying which, he placed himſelf before the door, to prevent Williams paſſing. " Very well, " young man," cried the enraged tutor: " you not only aſſault me under your " father's roof, in deſpite of every moral " rule, but you make me a priſoner."— " You ſhall be no priſoner here," ſaid Aubrey; " yet give me leave, Mr. " Williams, to expreſs my ſurpriſe that " you ſhould avoid taking part in the " explanation the circumſtance requires. " If Arthur has been the aggreſſor, be " aſſured his being my ſon will be an " additional motive for my diſpleaſure: " let me know what is the cauſe of " this." Williams hung his head and was ſilent. " The cauſe," ſaid Arthur, " is " plainly this: I have lately found him to " be a villain, and was this day provoked " to tell him ſo."—" How, Arthur!" cried Aubrey, " what language is this!

" whatever you might have been led to " think, you did not, I hope, make uſe " of ſuch a term."—" I did not, ſir," replied Arthur, " till he had called you " a beggar; I then, being provoked be- " yond bearing to hear you ſo abuſed, " told him he was a villain; on which, " truſting to his ſtrength, he aimed a " blow at me, which, had I not par- " ried it, might have killed me; but, " thanks to the leſſons I learned in " the country, my ſkill outmatched his " force: I was beating him before you " came in, and he muſt have ſoon yielded, " even if he had not received the blow " that ſtunned him."—" Beggar! Mr. " Williams," ſaid Aubrey, looking with conſcious dignity at the tutor, who at length raiſed his head, and, re-aſſuming the look of philoſophical conſequence, of which his drubbing had deprived him, began an oration, which he addreſſed to Aubrey:

Aubrey: "To take any notice of your "ſon's ſcurrility, Mr. Aubrey," ſaid he, "would be to degrade the prerogative "of reaſon. I ſhall only ſay, that, not-"withſtanding your reſtriction of my in-"ſtructions to the claſſics, I have "thought it a duty ſuperior to all others "to inſtil into his mind juſt notions of "the nature of things. I was but illuſ-"trating the nature of the equality of "man, by conſequences drawn from "your reverſe of fortune; when, as if "he had ſuddenly changed the opinions "he had formed upon the ſubject, he "took pet at me, grew teſty, and at "laſt proceeded to inſolence and to "blows."—"It was not for your opi-"nions on the equality of men," ſaid Arthur, "which I allow are very juſt; "but for your brutality, that I treated "you as I will every man, high, low,

" or equal, who ſhall dare to ſpeak a " humiliating ſyllable of my father."

The horror that began to riſe in Aubrey's mind as his ſon declared his approbation of a levelling principle, was ſuddenly diverted by the concluſion of his ſentence, and gave way to a feeling of the moſt delightful kind. As he looked at the beautiful, elegant, brave youth, whoſe auburn hair flowed in diſordered ringlets round his countenance, whoſe dreſs was diſcompoſed by the combat he had maintained, and whoſe ſlim figure formed a ſtriking contraſt to the broad, clumſy perſon of the vanquiſhed tutor, his ear drank the ſweet ſounds of filial love, his boſom glowed, his brow ſoftened, a ſmile flew to his lip, and a tear to his eye. He threw himſelf into Arthur's arms, preſſed him to his boſom; and, turning to the miſcreant whom his ſon had chaſtiſed, repeated with

with a ſmile : " Beggar! Mr. Williams, " what think you of my fortune now?"

Williams made an attempt to leave the room. " Before you go, ſir," continued Aubrey, " is not there an ac- " count to be ſettled between us?"— " You know very well," replied Williams, ſullenly, " that there is nothing " due to me."—" And is that all?" ſaid Aubrey; " is there no balance due to me? Does your memory refuſe to fur- " niſh you with the amount?" Williams was ſilent. " Then I'll tell you " what it is," proceeded Aubrey; " my " advance to you amounts to fifty " pounds; but go, and never let me " ſee you more; and, as an additional " puniſhment to that you have already " received from my ſon, I acquit you " of the debt." The tutor looked at Aubrey, then at Arthur, then again at Aubrey, as if he were going to ſay ſomething;

thing; but he ſeemed ſtruck dumb, bit his lips, and walked away.

On his leaving the room, Arthur informed his father that he had lately failed in reſpect in talking of him; that he had more than once ſaid, that there was nothing he ſo much enjoyed as the fall of a rich man; and that, in defending his opinion to-day, he had made ſuch inſolent applications to the family as were not to be borne. "I ſee, my dear boy," ſaid Aubrey, "that, in ſpite of his ta-"lents and education, he is a great "ſcoundrel; I need no other conviction "than a ſentiment which fell from your "own lips: but of that we muſt con-"verſe when we have more time; at "preſent, we have ſcarcely enough to "dreſs ourſelves before the company "will be here."—"I believe, ſir," ſaid Arthur, "that ſome change has taken "place; the friends you expected do

"not

"not come to-day. My mother will "inform you more. Shall we go to "her?" Aubrey looked ſurpriſed, and ſilently ſuffered himſelf to be led by his ſon to the nurſery; where Emily, Arthurina, and Arthur-William, flew from Mrs. Aubrey's ſide to load him with careſſes.

Having indulged in theſe, and ſpoken kindly to Mrs. Miller, who was on all occaſions admitted into the confidence of the family; "Well, Emily," ſaid he, extending his hand to Mrs. Aubrey, who beſtowed on it a preſſure which conveyed more than the uſual welcome of affection—it was a delicate, tremulous touch, that marked a tender concern for the new, painful feelings, to which misfortune had doomed him—"Well, Emily, my love, are we to have "the pleaſure of dining to-day likewiſe "*en famille?*"—"So it ſeems, my dear "Aubrey,"

"Aubrey," replied ſhe, taking half a dozen notes from her work-box, and giving them to him. They were apologies; but worded ſo nearly alike, that they very plainly ſpoke their purpoſe and their ſource. One will ſhow not only the ſpirit, but almoſt the letter of the reſt.

"Lord and Lady Aimwell preſent "compliments, and are much mor-"tified in requeſting that Mr. and Mrs. "Aubrey will accept an apology for "not attending their party to-day. "They deprive themſelves of the plea-"ſure on a very particular occaſion re-"ſpecting ſome extraordinary original "paintings; and the circumſtance will "be fully explained by their mutual "friend, Sir Kit Keeping."

The notes were clearer to Aubrey than to any other of the group around him; and his encounter with the connoiſſeur-

noiſſeur-baronet being neceſſary to the complete unravelling of theſe inſulting apologies, he ſat down amidſt the darlings of his heart, and fully unboſomed himſelf. Having related the mortifying occurrences of the two laſt mornings, he learned in turn from Mrs. Aubrey, that ſhe had received ſome very rude applications for money; and that the gloom he had perceived on the countenances of his wife and children, aroſe from Arthur's account of his tutor, which he had given before Aubrey's return, with much warmth and reſentment; and which his mother had deſired him not to trouble his father with at preſent. "My "dear children," ſaid Aubrey, "theſe "are the firſt leſſons of adverſity. What "we are not wiſe enough to learn by "precept, we muſt by experience. "Dear Emily!" continued he, addreſſing Mrs. Aubrey, "let us make the "true

" true uſe of theſe occurrences,—in the
" moſt noiſome plants bees find the ſup-
" plies for honey ;—inſtead of conſider-
" ing them as mortifications, let us look
" upon them as the operations of guar-
" dian angels, ſolicitous to remove our
" innocent children from the vortex of
" corruption, and to ſave both them and
" us before it is too late. The ways of
" Providence are inſcrutable ; yet they
" are not always ſo obſcure but that we
" may often trace the moſt benig-
" nant motives in the evils that befal us.
" You have ſeveral tales and fables on
" this ſubject, my loves, in the Spec-
" tator, Rambler, and other books."—
" Oh, yes, papa," ſaid Arthurina ; " it
" was only this morning that I read to
" mamma the ſtory of Bozaimutual
" Arthur-William the viſion of Amanda,
" from the Beauties of Hiſtory."—
" And what did you read, my dear
" Emily,

"Emily," said Aubrey to his eldest daughter."—"I only worked and lis-"tened, papa," replied she: "but, if "you wish it, I will make amends by "repeating Parnel's Hermit."—"She "can say it without missing a word, "pa'," cried Arthur-William. "Then, "my dear girl," said Aubrey, "you "shall repeat it after dinner, to set us "completely to rights. In the mean "time, let me observe, that we are ne-"ver so sensible of the lessons conveyed "in these moral tales as when they go "home to our bosoms. I see in the "mortifying occurrences of yesterday "and to-day, a warning to leave town, "and not to reject the curacy of Mari-"on: I see, in the loss of Aubrey-Hall, "with [illegible]ension of the easy, careless "life I have led, and a vocation to an "active ministry in the sacred profession, "for which I was ordained, and which

"I have

" I have entirely neglected. I see," continued he, after a pause, and looking at his son; " oh! Arthur, I see—yes, I hope " I see your mind snatched from a gulf " over which it hung, through the con- " fidence I too readily placed in the " vain, foolish fellow, who received his " desert from your hands—my dear boy, " you stood on a precipice!"—" My " dear sir," said Arthur, " the voice of " reason must be heard, even when it " comes from such a man: but pray, do " not be uneasy about me; for reason " and affection unite to make your hap- " pines of more consequence to me " than any thing else on earth." Mrs. Aubrey gave Arthur one of those affectionate, approving looks, which he often deservedly received from her. " The " voice of reason," said his father, taking his hand, and pressing it affectionately, " *shall* be heard, my dear Arthur; " for

" for, though that of preſumption is " often miſtaken for it, you have an " underſtanding, I am ſure, that will " readily diſtinguiſh the difference." Here Cæſar announced that dinner was ſerved up. Chearfulneſs reigned at the table, notwithſtanding the defection of the company: Parnel's poem, modeſtly and elegantly recited by Emily, crowned the deſert with a confirmation of the precepts of reſignation; and the ſongs of the evening were intermixed with converſation on an immediate removal to Mariton.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIV.

The Family unanimous reſpecting Mariton. A benevolent Exertion in an old Acquaintance. Pious Reſolutions. More of Mr. Cowper.

A FAMILY, healthy and united, are always prepared to ſuſtain the malice of fortune. The ſmiles of the world, like the warmth of a common fire, require to be ſuſtained by the labour or expence of thoſe who would be cheared by them, and, like that, may be extinguiſhed by accident or deſign: but the ſmiles of a virtuous family, like the matter of heat itſelf, which is inherent in the conſtitution of nature, are inſeparable from it, and ceaſe not to animate and chear while life remains. Aubrey, awak-

awakened to his errors, began to ſee favour in misfortune: the mortifications by which the family had been damped, terminated in increaſing the glow of natural affection; and now, inſtead of looking back either with regret or reſentment, they contemplated the proſpects yet reſerved for them with hope and delight.

They aſſembled next morning in the nurſery to breakfaſt. "I have thought "of nothing but Mariton all night "long," ſaid Arthurina; "I could not "ſleep for it."—"It has run in my "mind too," ſaid her ſiſter; "I know "we ſhall be ſo happy in the country."—"While we continue to love one ano-"ther," ſaid Mrs. Aubrey, "we ſhall "be happy any where."—"Well, Mrs. "Miller," ſaid Aubrey, "what think "you of Mariton?"—"God ſend we "were all houſed there, ſay I," replied ſhe;

ſhe; "I was ſadly afeard we were to "have the old life over again; grandeur "and want, ſtate and ſtarvation. My "dear, worthy, old maſter and miſ-"treſs broke their hearts, becauſe they "could not lower their pride. I am "glad, very glad, you are wiſer."— "'Sbidlikins! Mrs. Miller," cried Arthur, "do you know you are talking of my grandfather and grandmother?" —"Ay, God bleſs you, Mr. Arthur, I "do; and my maſter knows what I ſay "to be true, and how I loved them "both. Bating their nobility and great-"neſs, there did not exiſt two better or "nobler ſouls on the yearth; but they "could never give up exterials and "ſhow for reality and comfort. Well! "I hope I ſhall never live to ſee again "what they ſuffered. As for my part, "madam," ſaid ſhe to Mrs. Aubrey, "I only wiſh I had orders to begin

"packing

" packing up all your things. 'Sbid-
" likins; I am for going in time: a
" burnt child dreads the fire."—" 'Sbid-
" likins! that is not true, Mrs. Miller,"
cried Arthur-William; " do you re-
" member, a long time ago, when I
" burnt myſelf, I ſtill went on lighting
" crackers to frighten you?"—" Well
" then, Miller," ſaid Aubrey, " you
" may begin to pack up immediately,
" if your miſtreſs pleaſes; for, as we
" all ſeem of one mind reſpecting Mari-
" ton, the ſooner we go the better;
" and I will haſten my arrangements to
" go off, if poſſible, next week."

Arthurina clapped her hands, winked her eyes, and huzzaed; the others caught the huzza, and the nurſery was all uproar for ſome minutes, with jumping, dancing, and ſhouting. " How ſhall
" we travel?" ſaid Emily.—" Oh! in
" the coach, to be ſure," cried Arthu-

rina; "it is a nice, roomy coach, and "held us all so comfortably going to "France."—"I long to have the "house to rights," said Emily: "I "hope there's a good music-room— "oh, la! papa! the organ; we have "not heard it so long; it must be "put up; we shall be so happy! I "hope the people at Mariton are musi- "cal!"—"We will have such a charm- "ing library, Emily," said Arthur, "and take such pleasant walks and "rides."—"'Sbidlikins!" exclaimed Mrs. Miller, "one would conceive you "were going to set off post for Aubrey- "Hall, instead of a little parsonage- "house."—"Is it very little, papa?" cried Arthurina.—"I have never seen "the house, my love," replied he; "but you may be sure, compared with "Aubrey-Hall, it is small: yet I have "no doubt we shall find it commo-

"dious;

" dious; for the rectory is a rich one.
" But let us reſolve to be happy, or,
" rather, let us deſerve to be happy,
" and the ſize of it will not much
" ſignify."

They continued planning their happineſs till Aubrey was called to a gentleman in the parlour. His heart overflowed with affection and joy. What were wealth and worldly conſequence to a man poſſeſſed of ſuch celeſtial treaſures! Would he have exchanged them for millions of the richeſt coin? With which of his children would he have parted for a throne? They were indeed intrinſic wealth; their countenances the ſtamp of the genuine coin of the ſoul; their virtues the warrant of a heavenly avarice. The ſlighteſt diminution of love, the loſs of a beloved object, would have been ruin indeed; but fortune, but money, was enjoyed only in getting rid

of it. Glorying in love, and deſpiſing riches, he went down ſtairs, and, in the parlour, found a man who had neither wife nor children; and who, had he been offered his choice of a ſon or a ten pound bank-note, would have preferred the latter bleſſing: an aſſertion which, though it may ſurpriſe ſome parents, will create no wonder among juſtices of the peace and pariſh officers.

Aubrey took Mr. Elton by the hand, and, not having ſeen him for ſome time, aſked him how long he had been in town? "I am but juſt arrived, my "friend," ſaid he; "I have travelled "all night. I come to town on a buſi- "neſs moſt intereſting to humanity: "poor Winfield! I don't believe you "know him: he was the moſt affec- "tionate father! he had retired from "the ſervice for ſome time—his lieu- "tenant's half-pay was the only ſupport

"of

" of his charming family — they are " lovely children, Aubrey; but they " have loſt him, and with him every " means of ſubſiſtence; he is dead, " and Heaven knows what is to be- " come of them. My intention is to " intereſt every friend I have, to obtain " ſomething for them from the govern- " ment: you have more powerful inte- " reſt than I have, and I am come to " you the very firſt." Aubrey's imagination readily took the impreſſion of this ſketch, and ſoon formed it into a complete picture of diſtreſs. The faces he had juſt left up ſtairs remained in his mind, but fancy changed their ſmiles to tears, and the ſorrows of the lieutenant's children were ſeen on the features of his own. " Alas! Elton," ſaid he, " my " intereſt is not what it was; yet there " are ſome whom I have never tried, " and therefore muſt not condemn. I

" will not hesitate to prove their hearts " on this occasion, while you apply to " others of your friends."—" I dare " say," replied Mr. Elton, " that a pro- " vision of some kind will be obtained " in time; but I dread their immediate " sufferings; and, to apply for private " pecuniary assistance to strangers, " would be to wound the feelings of the " unhappy family. I have myself, as a " friend, gone beyond what I ought, " and indeed have distressed myself so " much for cash, that I really thought " of asking you to lend me a hundred " pounds for a short time."

As Aubrey was not in want of cash himself, he had never thought of sending the check he received from Sensitive to the banker. It was not enough to discharge the demands with which he had been pressed, and he had kept it in his pocket-book without thinking farther of

of it. He meant, indeed, to have returned it to Senſitive, as he was not likely to want money before his pictures were ſold; but he now deemed it fortunate that he had not. He mentioned it to Mr. Elton, who offered to bring him the caſh for it, as he was going near the banker's. Aubrey gave it to him. "The "poor Winfields," ſaid Mr. Elton, "ſhall be the better for your kind loan. "By this night's poſt they ſhall receive "a ſupply. I do not aſk you to contri- "bute yourſelf."—"But I do not the "leſs mean it," replied Aubrey; "pray "let thirty pounds of the ſupply be on "my account, and you can give me the "balance of the check to-morrow "morning. Will you breakfaſt with "me? To-day I am particularly en- "gaged." Mr. Elton made the warmeſt acknowledgments in the names of the unhappy Winfields; and, having ac-

cepted Aubrey's invitation to breakfaſt next morning at nine o'clock, took his leave.

Aubrey retired to the ſtudy, where he remained a conſiderable time, reviewing his paſt life, imagining the future, and forming ſuch reſolutions as might atone for his former inactivity and remiſſneſs. He promiſed his conſcience that he would not only perform the public offices of the church, but that he would in private be the paſtor and teacher of his pariſhioners; that he would alike gather the rich and the poor into the fold of his Maſter; and that his own family ſhould ſet an example, not only of virtue, but of piety, to the whole country. The more he reflected, the more he was ſatisfied with the interpoſition of Providence; a glow of ſelf-approbation pervaded his frame, and he remembered his

his friend Cowper's appointment with pleasing expectation.

At the hour appointed, Mr. Cowper came: he appeared in the same neat thread-bare drab coat he wore at his first visit; and, as then, won respect and affection by his bald head, penetrating eyes, dignity of demeanour, and friendly designs. He was warmly introduced by Aubrey to Mrs. Aubrey; and individually to Arthur, Emily, Arthurina, and Arthur-William; and, by his amiable manners, was soon on a footing of intimacy with them all. Before they went to dinner, he was informed of Aubrey's resolution to accept the curacy of Mariton, made acquainted with the plans of the family, and asked a variety of questions respecting the house, the appearance of the country, and the characters of the inhabitants. He was describing some of these when they were

ſummoned to dinner. Mariton continued the ſubject of converſation; it ſeemed poſſeſſed of inexhauſtible topics; and Mr. Cowper was ſo charmed with the innocent gaiety and ſpirits of his young friends, that he took pleaſure in gratifying them with minute details.

After a deſcription of the houſe, from which it appeared, to the delight of all the family, that it was not the little parſonage Mrs. Miller had forejudged, but a conſiderable building, of a handſome appearance, and very pleaſantly ſituated on the bank of a trout-ſtream; and, after the young people had arranged every room in it and every ſpot about it according to their fancy, placed the organ, arranged the library, ſtocked the pond with carp, collected blackbirds and thruſhes in the ſhrubbery, and lodged the coach in the coach-houſe, Mr. Cowper, with a friendly laugh, told them, he had never heard

that

that there was any gold-mine in the premiſes. The girls did not exactly comprehend him; but Aubrey did, and explained the reſource he meant to bring in aid of the ſtipend of the curacy and freedom from houſe-rent at Mariton. Having run over ſome of the grand ſubjects among his pictures, and ſaid what they had coſt: "You are aware, Cowper," continued he, "that the originals of the great maſters loſe no value in lying by; on the contrary, I ſhall probably get more for the paintings than they coſt." Mr. Cowper, who knew nothing of this reſource, and had really ſought Aubrey from believing that he was completely ruined, ſmiled with delight at the intelligence; for, though no judge of the peculiar touches that diſtinguiſh the execution of the celebrated painters, he well knew that

their works were real treaſures, and readily turned to gold.

" I heartily rejoice," ſaid he, " to " hear of this; and the more ſo, Aubrey, " as I find you determined, neverthe- " leſs, to take the curacy, on the ſub- " ject of which I ſhall write to the rec- " tor by to-morrow's poſt. Had I " known what you had ſaved from your " wreck, it is ten to one I had not taken " the liberty of forcing myſelf into your " houſe."—" I am glad you did not " know it," cried Arthur.—" I am " glad you did not know it," echoed the girls.—" I am equally glad, my " dear young friends," ſaid Cowper, " now that I am ſenſible of the happi- " neſs I ſhould have miſſed. Indeed," continued he, turning to Aubrey, " I " am truly delighted with what you " have told me; but, truſt my expe- " rience, you cannot too ſoon diſcharge

" from

" from this dear circle ſome of the ſu-
" pernumerary ideas imbibed with the
" milk of fortune; for habit transforms
" ſuperfluities into neceſſaries."—" And
" do you think, Mr. Cowper," ſaid
Mrs. Aubrey, " that ideas and ſenti-
" ments ſhould be limited according to
" the ſtate of one's purſe?"—" Only
" ſuch," replied he, " as are apt to ge-
" nerate wants which cannot be grati-
" fied but at ſome expence of virtue.
" You will allow, that all notions which,
" in their operations, prepare remorſe
" for the mind, ſhould be diſcarded."—
" No doubt," ſaid Mrs. Aubrey; " but
" ſurely the cultivation of taſte and the
" improvement of knowledge can never
" have ſuch a tendency."—" Where
" taſte follows nature, and knowledge is
" uſeful, they are perhaps leſs dange-
" rous; and not at all, where a ſufficient
" ſtock of good ſenſe has been laid in

" for

" for the guidance of conduct: but how " difficult is it to relinquish gratifica- " tions for which a taste has been ac- " quired, or to withdraw our mind " from pleasing, though useless, know- " ledge, to fix it on more homely, yet " more serviceable information? Con- " fess now, that it is very fortunate that " there is a room at Mariton parsonage " fit for the organ to stand in; and that " you will be able to hire a person who " understands brewing?"—" I own, in- " deed," replied she," " that the loss of " music would be dreadful."—" Oh! " how satirical you are, Mr. Cowper!" said Emily.—" But, as for brewing," added Arthurina, " you are out there; " for we all like water better than beer." —" I like wine best," cried little Ar- thur-William.—" That's honest, my " boy," said Mr. Cowper; " and your " sisters like shrubberies, carp-ponds,

and

" and coach-houſes." There was a general laugh. " Why, my dear girls, " little as you think it, you have al- " ready laid out, in imagination, on the " parſonage and grounds, what would " ſupport the family handſomely for two " years."—" I am ſure I did not mean " it though," ſaid Emily.—" Nor I," added Arthurina.—" I know," ſaid Emily, " that Arthurina and I could " give up every thing to make papa and " mamma happy."—" I know then," ſaid Mr. Cowper, gazing fondly at her through the big tears that ruſhed to his eyes, " I know then that you deſerve to " be happy; and oh! may God Al- " mighty watch over you, and preſerve " you, to form their happineſs as long " as they live!"

There was a violence in Mr. Cowper's emotion, for which Aubrey was at a loſs to account. He continued gazing at Emily;

Emily; and at laſt gave way to a copious ſhower of tears. The party, ignorant of the cauſe, could only view him with wonder: he ſoon, however, wiped away his tears, and apologized for them. "It is now long ſince I have been ſo "overcome," ſaid he, "and that you "ſhould wonder at this ſudden agitation "in a ſtranger is natural; but, ſimple as "were the words Miſs Aubrey uſed, "they touched a ſpring that opens the "flood-gates of my heart. 'I could "give up every thing, papa, to make "you happy;' is a ſentence deeply en-"graven on my ſoul; it once gave me "unmingled pleaſure; it delights me "now: but, oh! the pang that accom-"panies the recollection! The plea-"ſures and pains of the mind are nearly "allied. You will underſtand me when, "in telling you that I was a father, I "add that I am childleſs."

He

He ſtopped, and covered his face with his hands. The wonder he had cauſed made room for pity; and the affection he had already gained in the Aubrey family rapidly augmented. "I "have, indeed, two adopted chil- "dren," ſaid he, removing his hands, and regaining his firmneſs, "whom I "love as a father, and who return my "love: they ſoothe my life; and, "though I indulge my imagination in "dwelling much on the end of it, I "feel they give a great value to the "intermediate ſpace."—"I am truly "happy to hear it," ſaid Mrs. Aubrey; "are they girls or boys?"—"A boy "and a girl," he replied.—"How "old are they, Mr. Cowper?" aſked Arthur-William.—"Something older "than you, my love," ſaid Cowper: "they are about the age of your bro- "ther and ſiſter."—"And do they

"call

" call you pa'?"—" They do indeed, " and my ſiſter mamma."—" La!" cried Arthur-William, " I dare ſay I " ſhould love them."—" I hope," ſaid Emily, " that we ſhall often meet when " we are ſettled near them at Mari- " ton."—" My dear," replied Mr. Cowper, " we do not live in that part " of the country."—" Not live at " Mariton!" exclaimed the whole circle.—" But what of that," ſaid he, " we " will contrive to meet notwithſtand- " ing; and, when you know more of " us, I hope you will not love us leſs."—" Come, Cowper," ſaid Aubrey, " let us know more of you now: I long " to hear what you have been about " ſince our youthful days at the uni- " verſity. When you were here the " other morning, you gave me a kind " of promiſe to relate the occurrences " of your life: if it is not too late—"

—" Not

—" Not to-night," ſaid Mr. Cowper: " it is not only too late, but I muſt go " in queſt of Edmund, whom your " company had almoſt made me for- " get."—" Is your ſon in town?" cried Arthur. — " Edmund Smyth is his " name," ſaid Cowper: " you ſhall ſee " him before we go; but he is much " engaged."—" I wiſh you had brought " him to-day," ſaid Aubrey: " will " you come again to-morrow, and " bring him with you?"—" He is pe- " culiarly circumſtanced while we re- " main in town," replied Cowper: " he " muſt make the beſt uſe of his time " while he is here; his evenings are " engaged in attending lectures. At " what hour do you breakfaſt?"— " Name your own hour," ſaid Mrs. Aubrey.—" Allowing for the London " diviſion of time," replied he, " we " will be with you at ten o'clock. Ed-

mund

" mund muſt go from you ſoon; and, " perhaps, ſo muſt I: but, if you are " diſengaged in the evening, I will re- " turn and talk about Mariton and my- " ſelf." He then took his leave of the family; who parted with him reluctantly, and ſat ſome time talking of him and of Mariton before they parted themſelves for the night.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XV.

A Country Youth. Danger of the firſt Step in Vice. A Word for brown Complexions, and another for fair ones.

Soon after nine next morning Aubrey, expecting Mr. Elton earlier than Mr. Cowper, repaired to the breakfaſt-room, where he continued reading the newſpapers till he was joined by the family. They were all aſſembled ſome minutes before Mr. Cowper came; but he was punctual, and brought with him Edmund, whom he preſented as his ſon. Aubrey and Arthur ſhook hands with him; and the reception he met with from Mrs. Aubrey and the girls was

ſuch as may be conceived from their prepoſſeſſion in favour of Mr. Cowper.

Edmund was a fair, florid, country youth; he was taller and rather more muſcular in his limbs than Arthur; the grace with which nature had endowed his perſon, was almoſt entirely concealed by the faſhion of his clothes, which had been made by a plain village-taylor, of cloth as coarſe, but not ſo thread-bare, as Cowper's coat. There appeared at firſt a timidity in his manners, which, however, was not diſpleaſing, as it was the effect of diffidence, and not of baſhfulneſs: it was ſoon worn off by the kind and encouraging converſation of Mrs. Aubrey and the young ladies; and, long before the morning was ſpent, he began to ſpeak without the preface of a bluſh.

Aubrey, as ſoon as the ceremony of introducing Edmund was over, expreſſed his

his ſurpriſe at Elton's delay. "Elton!" ſaid Cowper, "Jack Elton! Do you "expect him to breakfaſt?"—"I do "indeed," replied Aubrey, drawing Mr. Cowper to the window, where, while the family were talking to Edmund, he acquainted him with the diſtreſs of the poor Winfields, and the uſe he had made of Senſitive's check. "I "am ſorry to hear it," ſaid Mr. Cowper; "for three hundred pounds is too much "for you to loſe at preſent."—"To loſe!" cried Aubrey.—"Jack Elton," continued Mr. Cowper, "has been long ſinking; "but, to ſave himſelf, he plunges and "catches at every thing about him. "Originally a man of ſome property, "his firſt errors were the reſult of mere "imprudence in the management of his "affairs; he next thoughtleſsly made "others ſubſervient to his wants; and "he is now ſyſtematically living upon his

" his wits. He is a proof of the juſtice " of my obſervation to Mrs. Aubrey " laſt night, that ideas of elegance are " dangerous in poverty. Had he had " ſufficient ſtrength of mind to diſcard " fictitious wants, he might by his ta- " lents have ſpent his life uſefully; and " habit, the moſt powerful moulder of " nature, would have rendered it agree- " able: but now he is within the vortex " of deſtruction; his life is not only uſe- " leſs, but wicked; and it is not im- " probable but it may be ſhortened by " the law. Let this, however, be be- " tween ourſelves. Your friend Senſi- " tive is at one of the commencing " points of this deplorable route, but he " may yet be ſaved: his mind is not " debaſed."—" You ſurpriſe me very " much," ſaid Aubrey: " Senſitive's " fortune is large."—" It is," replied Mr. Cowper; " and, in imagination, he

" deſtines

" deſtines it to noble purpoſes; but it will
" vaniſh ſuddenly before he is aware of
" it. Not yet three-and-twenty, and
" he is already the victim of ſenſibility.
" It is true he feels no diminution of
" his fortune; but, to my knowledge,
" he has entered into large ſecurities
" for pretended friends, who will leave
" him at the day of payment to anſwer
" them, and they will go near to ruin
" him."—" Poor fellow! I am truly
" ſorry to hear it," ſaid Aubrey; " he
" deſerves a better fate."—" So did
" Elton," replied Mr. Cowper; " for
" his deſcent from honour to the arts of
" deception was gradual. Not two
" years ago, he would ſooner have died
" than have invented this tale of the
" Winfields." Aubrey ſtared with aſto-
niſhment. " So juſt," continued Cow-
per, " is the precept that guards us
" againſt the firſt ſeductions of evil, be

" the objects ever so slight; for, as the " French proverb says, *ce n'est que le pre-* " *mier pas qui coute.* When the dominions " of Vice are once entered, the appre- " hensions which kept us out of them " vanish; crimes as we approach them, " contrary to the laws of natural optics, " decrease their magnitude; horrors, " on the confines of Virtue, become " imperceptible; and, frequently, it " is not till the way back is lost in " endless intricate deviations, that we " become sensible of the dreadful pro- " gress. I trust that Senfitive may be " kept within the confines of rectitude." —" Oh! he must! he shall!" said Aubrey, warmly.—" He shall:" said Mr. Cowper, " if I — if the awakening of " his reasoning will effect it." Here Aubrey looked at Mr. Cowper, as if to read his character in his countenance; and he was associating some confused notions

notions of his own ſituation and Senſitive's, which, before the connexion was fully conceived, were diſperſed, by Mrs. Aubrey's calling him to the table, where the tea was already poured out.

The morning was agreeably and rationally ſpent. Edmund, by degrees, diſplayed ſentiments and qualities which excited eſteem and affection; and Arthur aſſured him, that he extremely regretted that their habitations in the country were ſo diſtant from each other. When they parted, it was with a mutual aſſurance of friendſhip; and Mr. Cowper promiſed to return in the evening.

After they were gone, the family all gave their opinions individually of Edmund. Emily thought him a good young man, handſome in his face, but aukward in his perſon. Arthurina ſaid he was a little too ſedate. Arthur-William, who had been very attentive to

him when he talked of hunting, said he should like to ride his horse: and Arthur declared he was the most sensible, unaffected young man he had ever met with. Both Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey expressed themselves highly in his favour; and said that they longed to know more of the history of himself and his sister. "We shall probably have that satisfac-"tion to-night," said Arthur, "if Mr. "Cowper is not diverted from his in-"tention by some interruption."— "Oh! do, papa," cried Emily, "keep "him to his word, and don't be at home "to any body." Aubrey promised both; and the family then parted for the morning: Mrs. Aubrey, the girls, and Arthur-William, went up to Mrs. Miller; and Aubrey and Arthur strolled to Mr. Flourish's room, to take a view of the pictures, and to learn what company they had attracted.

The

The place was ſtill crowded when they arrived: they met ſeveral of their acquaintance, who greeted them with their uſual familiarity; and Aubrey had the ſatisfaction to hear that the paintings were generally admired. Meeting Mr. Flouriſh, he conſulted him on fixing the day for the ſale. Mr. Flouriſh thought, as the town was full, that it ſhould not be delayed above a week longer; and it was accordingly agreed that it ſhould be adverti ſed for that day week.

While he was ſpeaking with the auctioneer, a ſtranger came up to him, and, pointing to a Madonna which Aubrey had added to his collection about two years before, wiſhed to know if he would part with it by private agreement. Aubrey ſaid he had no objection, provided he could get his price for it: on which Mr. Flouriſh aſſuming his profeſſional ſtyle, and addreſſing the ſtranger, ſaid:

" Sir, you could not have displayed
" finer taste, truer judgment, than in
" the choice of this piece. What a
" beautiful brunette! Raphael's most
" charming Madonna. His earlier Ma-
" donnas, sir, those I mean of his middle
" style, are generally of a lighter and
" less taking complexion. I am fully
" persuaded, sir, though some men's
" judgments are apt to be guided by
" particular attachments, that a com-
" plete brown beauty is really prefe-
" rable to a perfect fair one: the bright
" brown gives a lustre to all the other
" colours, a vivacity to the eyes, and a
" richness to the whole look, which
" one seeks in vain in the whitest and
" most transparent skins. All the best
" artists in the noblest age of painting,
" about Leo the Tenth's time, used this
" deeper and richer kind of colouring:
" indeed, the glaring lights introduced

" by

" by Guido, went a great way toward " the declenſion of the art; as the en- " feebling of the colours by Carlo Ma- " rati has ſince almoſt completed the " fall of it in Italy."

Aubrey was delighted with the ſcience diſplayed by the auctioneer; but, as he had heard him deſcant with wonderful rhetoric on the dyes on a china bowl, he had no doubt that his eloquence was chiefly indebted to his memory, and that he had learned much of it verbatim by heart.

" I am willing," ſaid the ſtranger, " to give a good price for it, though I " am certain it is not an original."— " Not an original! ſir," exclaimed Mr. Flouriſh; " I can only tell you that it " coſt Mr. Aubrey ſeven hundred " pounds." The ſtranger ſhook his head, ſmiled, begged pardon, and walked on. Aubrey went with Mr.

Flouriſh towards the door; when the latter heard his name called, but, catching no eye, did not diſtinguiſh the perſon.

"Flouriſh!" ſaid Lord Tallboy, who ſpoke without removing his eyes from a Magdelen which he was ſcrutinizing with all the attention and geſtures of a profeſſed connoiſſeur, and whom a rapid glance on the ſurrounding taſte-hunters had informed of the auctioneer's approach;—"this is a —"—"a very fine "Magdelen, my lord," added Flouriſh; who now perceived the young nobleman from the continuance of his voice, and the diſcontinuance of his remark. "A "very fine one, by G—d!" ſaid Lord Tallboy emphatically; "it is a Mag-"delen plain enough, by her tears."— "Nay, my lord, if there were no tears "on the face," ſaid Flouriſh, "you "might ſee, by the humid redneſs of

"the

" the ſkin, that ſhe had been weeping " extremely :—Elle pleure juſqu'aux " bouts de doigts; it weeps all over." " —Clearly, by G—d?" returned his lordſhip: " Le Brun was a famous " painter of Magdelens: this is a — a" —" Titian, my lord."—" I know; it " is equal to his Venus, by G—d!"— Then pointing to the next picture, he continued: " What a ſoft, ſilky ſkin " has the artiſt given to that Madonna " next to it! What an exquiſite com- " plexion! that muſt be one of —"— " Guido's, my lord," added Flouriſh: " the colour of the complexion," continued the auctioneer, " is the moſt " beautiful ever imagined; it is that " which Apelles gave to his famous Ve- " nus, and which, though the picture " itſelf be loſt, Cicero has in ſome de- " gree preſerved to us in his excellent " deſcription of it. It was a fine red,

" beautifully intermixed and incorpo-
" rated with white, and diffuſed in due
" proportion through each part of the
" body. Such is often the colouring of
" Titian, particularly in the ſleeping
" Venus; and ſuch are the deſcriptions
" of a moſt beautiful ſkin in ſeveral of
" the Roman poets *:

" Accepît vocem lacrymus Latinia matis
" Flagrantus profuſo genus qui plurimus ignum
" Subjacit rubor, & violaverit oſtro
" Alba roſa; tales virgo dabat ore colores †."

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* Beaumont's Crito.

† Accepit vocem lacrymis Lavinia matris,
Flagrantes perfuſa genas; cui plurimus ignem
Subjecit rubor, & calefacta per ora cucurrit:
Indum ſanguineo veluti violaverit oſtro
Siquis ebur, aut mixta rubent ubi lilia multâ
Alba roſâ; tales dabat ore colores.
ÆN. 12. 69.

At this a flood of tears Lavinia ſhed;
A crimſon bluſh her beauteous face o'erſpread,
Varying her cheeks by turns with white and red.

The

Arthur endeavoured in vain to follow the ſenſe of theſe lines; and Aubrey was now fully convinced that Flouriſh ſpoke by rote; and that he had conned his leſſon both for Raphael's bright brown, and the fine red and white of Apelles; but that his memory, as is natural, was truer to his mother-tongue than to one which he did not underſtand.

The driving colours, never at a ſtay,
Run here and there; and fluſh and fade away.
Delightful change! thus Indian ivory ſhows,
Which with the bordering paint of purple glows;
Or lilies damaſk'd by the neighbouring roſe.

DRYDEN.

CHAPTER XVI.

Conticuere omnes. Commencement of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory.

THE day paſſed without a ſight, or even recollection of Mr. Elton. The minds of the Aubreys were engroſſed with the hopes placed on the pictures, with the thoughts of ſettling at Mariton, and with the expectation of Mr. Cowper, who came as he had promiſed. He took his chair by the corner of the fire. After ſome little chat about the neighbours whom the family would find in the country, obſerving their attention prepared for the recital of his own hiſtory, he drew a ſmall table to him, reſted his arm upon it, and began as follows:

"I know

" I know not, my friends, any better means for opening the hearts of others, than that of opening our own to them. It is the greateſt proof we can give of our intereſt in any one, to diſcloſe our ſecrets, ſhow our faults, confeſs our ſorrow for them, commune on virtue, and profeſs affection; therefore, having formed a plot upon the hearts of this circle, I have the more readily determined to make them completely acquainted with the man who aſks their love. ' A crowd is not company, faces ' are but a gallery of pictures, and talk ' but a tinkling cymbal where there is ' not love,' ſaid one well acquainted with nature: ' you may take ſarza to ' open the liver, ſteel to open the ſpleen, ' flour of ſulphur for the lungs, caſto- ' reum for the brain, but no receipt ' opens the heart but a true friend.' Aubrey, I know your opinion of old on friendſhip,

friendſhip, and experience has convinced me that it is in a great degree a juſt one. That friendſhip in which we impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, ſuſpicions, counſels, and whatever lies upon the heart, is almoſt a fable; it may have flouriſhed in former ages, like chivalry; but, like that, has been long deemed Quixotiſm. An interchange of kindneſſes, while mutually conducive to ſelf-intereſt, is as much as can be expected in theſe days. I allow all this; yet, believe me, I have been fortunate enough to witneſs pure, unchangeable friendſhip in one inſtance; and, as a ſecond inſtance, I declare to you I have participated it myſelf in a degree never ſurpaſſed in reality, ſcarcely to be ſurpaſſed in imagination. Form your friendſhips, my dear children, where nature dictates, at home, among yourſelves; and, if you find it elſewhere, you will have the more reaſon

to

to rejoice; but at home it is the moſt delightful. I ſpeak from experience—mine was at home. I will not, however, anticipate.

" Having the ſtart of you, Aubrey, I had left the univerſity about a year, I think, when I heard of your marriage. I was at the time preparing to go abroad to my father, who had left England two years before; finding it neceſſary, as he pretended to me, for his health, to live in a purer climate than his own country afforded, and he had choſen Oporto for his reſidence. The allowance he made me was handſome; and, had he not preſſed me in a very warm manner to go to him, I ſhould have been contented to continue at home, for a reaſon which I ſhall now tell you, but to which he was then a ſtranger. In doing this, my dear young friends, I make a confeſſion of my firſt crime, which, from

being the greateſt delight, became the ſource of the greateſt miſeries of my life. *Your* hearts, *your* principles are in no danger; for you are educated in the boſoms of your parents, where you imbibe virtues that will ſtand the aſſaults of all temptations; therefore, when I tell you that, in my childhood and youth, all I received of my father himſelf, were the uſual pleaſures of the times and ſupplies of money, do not hate me when you hear that I deceived him."—"What a pity!" cried Emily. —"You will think ſo ſtill more by and by," reſumed Mr. Cowper: "it is a pity, my love, that the nature of man is in a ſtate that requires the vigilance and guidance of perſons intereſted in his welfare, to keep him in the path of rectitude. Youth ought not to be left to itſelf, or to the care of negligent hirelings. The parent who does not himſelf frequently

quently examine the heart of his child, who does not ſeaſonably weed out the roots of error, and ſow and guard the ſeeds of virtue, has not much reaſon to complain if he find tares growing with the corn. In the preſent ſtate of nature, evil will grow up with good; and he that would have the latter greatly preponderate in the mind of his child, muſt ſeaſonably ſee the former removed. I do not, however, complain of my father, for he meant well; but certainly I was left too much to myſelf, at an age when reaſon cannot be mature.

"You remember, Aubrey, that I uſed to ſtay but little at Cambridge, and you will be ſurpriſed to hear that I was a huſband before my name was entered at the univerſity."—"I am "indeed, ſurpriſed," ſaid Aubrey; "how could you, at that age, keep it ſo "profound a ſecret?"—"I dreaded my father,"

father," replied Cowper: "he kept me at ſchool till I was nineteen years old, for the purpoſe of grounding me well in the claſſics before I went to college. In the laſt year of my ſtay, I was one day walking with a Virgil in my hand through ſome fields, on a foot-path not much frequented but on market-days, leading to a village on the Gloceſter road, between three and four miles from Thornbury, where I was at ſchool: getting over a ſtile, I perceived, at ſome diſtance, a man with his arms round the waiſt of a young woman, who was ſtruggling to free herſelf from him. I quickened my pace, and ſoon came up with them. On obſerving me he quitted his hold, but continued to walk at her ſide. I concluded from this that they were acquainted, and I paſſed them without any ſcrutiny; when I ſuddenly felt myſelf ſeized by the arm, and dragged back-

backwards: looking round, I found the girl clinging to me, and the man pulling her away. Her face was beautiful, and in tears. 'Oh, sir!' cried she, with a tremulous voice and terrified countenance, 'save me, I beseech you!' I instinctively said, 'let the girl alone.' —'Do you let her alone,' answered he, 'and go about your business.' On this I examined him from head to foot, and found that he had more bone than I had; but I instantly resolved, notwithstanding, to rescue the girl at the risk of a good drubbing. 'You have no more busi-'ness to meddle with her than I have,' said I, 'nor so much, for she applies to 'me herself.'—'You had better go about 'your business,' repeated he, looking sternly; 'the girl's a relation of mine, 'and I'll take care of her.' I could not help smiling. 'A relation of yours!' said I: 'Why! she is a country girl; 'and

'and I ſhould take you for a gentleman, 'by your clothes.'

"Whether irritated by the ſting in this expreſſion, or encouraged by my appearance of youth, I know not, but, ſtill holding the girl with his left hand, he aimed a blow at me with his right, which I fortunately parried, and returned ſo earneſtly, that, to defend himſelf, he was under the neceſſity of letting the object of the conteſt go. She immediately took to her heels, and was probably out of ſight in a minute; but I was too ſeriouſly engaged to follow her with my eyes. The aſſailant and I were now front to front, and a deſperate battle enſued. Neither of us was a ſkilful combatant, and his ſtrength was certainly ſuperior to mine; yet not ſo much but that I kept him in play a conſiderable time: from want of knowledge in the noble art of pugiliſm, heavy blows were

were mutually received, and blood and bruiſes were exchanged. At length, finding that I began to be exhauſted, I reſolved to make a laſt powerful effort for the victory; and, collecting all my force, I took an aim with my fiſt at his cheſt, and, with a joint impetus, threw my head into his face. He faſtened his hands about me, and, clinging as he reeled, fell, and pulled me along with him. In the ſtruggle to diſengage myſelf, my arm got into an aukward poſition, and the bone ſnapped as we came to the ground. In this ſtate I believe he would have murdered me, had he not, as he roſe, heard the hollowing of people approaching in the adjoining field; on which he gave me a ſevere kick on my ſide, which I ſometimes feel to this day, and made off as faſt as he could. He was over the one ſtile ſome minutes before the perſons whoſe voices had

had alarmed him appeared at the other. I lay on the ground, quite exhauſted, when they came up to me. The girl herſelf, whom I had reſcued, was foremoſt. Perceiving me from the ſtile, ſhe ſhrieked, left the others, and running forward, dropped breathleſs at my ſide. We were ſoon ſurrounded by a group of men and women, armed with ſticks and pitchforks. I told them that my antagoniſt could hardly be out of the next field; on which ſome of them ſet off after him: very fortunately for him, he outſtripped them.

"In the mean time, I raiſed myſelf to a fitting poſture, and laid my broken arm on my knee. The innocent cauſe of my diſaſter ſoon recovered, and, as ſhe looked at me with eyes of grateful inquiry, I could not, in ſpite of the pain I ſuffered, help admiring the beauty of her face. The contour was oval, the

features

features prominent, her nose was aquiline, her mouth a perfect rose-bud, her complexion an exquisite mixture of white and red, a little tanned, the colour of her eyes a deep blue, that of her hair a light brown, and it waved in natural ringlets about her forehead, which was shaded by a modest bonnet. Nature had been equally bountiful to her person: she was slender, above the middle size, and, though her coarse russet gown marked the rustic, her form possessed those native, simple graces, which art may improve, but cannot give. At that time I admired beauty as it struck my eye, without thinking of the nature and causes of it; but I have since reflected with more judgment on the reason of the impression it then made on my heart as well as on my eye. Fanny's beauty ——"

Here

Here Mr. Cowper paused: he rose, walked to the end of the room, shed some tears to memory, wiped them from his cheeks, returned, and resumed his story. The Aubreys were kept silent by the sympathy produced by his distress. He proceeded without taking notice of the moisture which glistened in their eyes.

"Her name was Fanny Ross. Fanny's beauty at that time made its impression by the emanation of soul which appeared in her eyes, on her lips, in her attitudes. The noble and virtuous passions are the grand source of grace, of that grace that creates love; for a certain degree of grace may be attendant on the mere motion of the limbs and of the muscles in the face; but it is the internal amiable movements, it is the fine emotions of the soul, which, expanding on the surface of the human form, be-

stow

ſtow upon it the grace that captivates the heart. Fanny's countenance and attitude, which made me forget my broken arm, beamed with an emotion — oh! I remember it but too well," ſaid he, raiſing his ſhoulders, and preſſing his temples towards each other with a hand that covered his eyes:—"an emotion," continued he, "the beſt adapted to win affection, as it is the effect of one of the moſt pleaſing virtues of thinking beings. Though my face was bloody and disfigured, and might have excited horror, Fanny's eyes and lips, and poſture, were governed by GRATITUDE: it was mingled with much anguiſh, and a conſiderable degree of ſilent ſelf-reproach; and the meanneſs of her ruſtic veſtments were loſt in the radiance of the united emotions." Here Mrs. Aubrey ſmiled. "I ſee," ſaid he, "you think that, though my knowledge is im-

proved, my deſcription is better ſuited to my age at the time of the event, than to my preſent years; but ſo it is, my dear Mrs. Aubrey, I never can ſpeak of it without ardour.

" On reviving, ſhe ſtood up, her hands claſped, her head a little on one ſide and bent forward. To relieve her, I made light of the ſtate I was in, and telling her with a ſmile that I ſhould be very well when I had waſhed my face with a little freſh water, deſired her to go and bring me ſome. I ſaid this to ſpare her the grief of knowing that my arm was broken; and ſhe flew to obey me. I then told the fact to the people about me, and requeſted that one of the men would accompany me to Thornbury. I had near three miles to walk. The good folks raiſed me on my legs; and one of the women having made me a ſling with a large neck handkerchief, and

and put my arm into it, they all went with me through the fields as far as the high-road, where I was taking leave of them, when I ſaw Fanny getting over the oppoſite ſtile; upon which I reſolved to wait till ſhe came up. In her hands ſhe had a wooden bowl and a bottle of water, and from her pocket ſhe took a clean white towel and a piece of ſoap. At ſight of the ſling ſhe turned pale; and, when I told her that I could not waſh my face, her tears ran down her cheeks, and ſhe aſked me to allow her to do it. I ſaid I could make a better uſe of the water, and, taking the bottle from her, I put it to my mouth, and drank a good draught of it. This revived me very much; I aſſured her it did; and then preſſed her to return to the village with the good people whom ſhe had brought to my aſſiſtance. She anſwered with a freſh ſhower of tears;

while the villagers bleſſed me. One of them accompanied me; and the reſt, with Fanny, returned home.

" Being refreſhed by the water, I walked on with leſs difficulty. I leave you to imagine the buſtle at the ſchool when I arrived. The ſurgeon was immediately brought, and declared the fracture to be a ſimple one. Having ſet the bone, he ordered me to keep my room, to which I was confined a full fortnight. When the cauſe of my battle was known, it gained me great credit, not only in the houſe, but throughout the town.

" One morning in the ſecond week of my confinement, the chambermaid, who had before paid me ſome compliments as ſhe put the room to rights, ſaid to me with a ſmile: ' La! maſter Cow-' per, what a very pretty girl that is ' you fought for.' I aſked her how ſhe knew?

knew? 'I can't but know,' replied she, 'when I have seen her every day, every 'day, since you have been ill.' I was delighted with this new proof of the girl's goodness; and, to confess the truth, she ran very much in my head; for, as the chambermaid might have said, I thought of her every day, every day.

"Has she really called every day?" said I.—'She has indeed, Master Cow-'per' replied Betty, 'till yesterday, and 'then she sent a man.' I begged the maid, if he came the next day, to let me see him; which she promised to do. My intention was to make some inquiries respecting the beautiful rustic, and the person who insulted her; and I was impatient for the next day's call. Betty was true to her word; and, about ten o'clock, introduced into my room the man who had accompanied me home on the day of the combat, and with

whom the pain I ſuffered had prevented my converſing. The villager was a middle-aged man, of a pleaſing aſpect, with ruſtic, but agreeable manners. After expreſſing his own ſatisfaction at the progreſs of my recovery, he aſſured me that I had been the talk of the village of Melford ever ſince I had been Fanny Roſs's friend againſt the ruffian who had attacked her in the field.

" In talking with this countryman, I learned that Fanny was the only child of a ſmall farmer, who, after a laborious life, had begun to lay ſomething by, when he was ſuddenly cut off from all the cares of this world; that he left no property of any value behind him; but that, having ſubſcribed to a tontine for his wife and daughter, they had annuities, amounting together to thirty pounds; that the widow and her daughter lived in a cottage in Melford, where,

by

by raiſing poultry and taking in plain work, they almoſt doubled their annuity, and were beloved by all the neighbours. ‘ As for that there villain who affronted ‘ Fanny,’ ſaid he, ‘ noabody knows unny ‘ thing about ’un, where he went to, or ‘ where he come from. That there day ‘ was the firſt time ſhe ever ſeed ’un in ‘ her whole life.’

“ This,” continued Mr. Cowper, “ is a very extraordinary circumſtance; he never was heard of before nor ſince. He was apparently a genteel young man, and very little older than myſelf; but I do not know that I ſhould have recognized him had I met him again; for I was more particular in tracing the muſcles of his limbs than his features, and the whole buſineſs was ſo agitated and ſhort, that it is no wonder if the impreſſion of his fiſts ſuperſeded the impreſſion of his features on my eyes.

In a different place, and after a ſhort lapſe of time, I could not have identified him. Having ſatisfied myſelf as far as the information of my viſitor extended, I diſmiſſed him with my thanks, deſiring him to tell Fanny that, as I was now ſo well, ſhe muſt not give herſelf the trouble of ſending or coming to inquire for my health; and to aſſure her that ſhe need not be ſorry for what I had ſuffered, as that was paſt; and that the remembrance of the ſervice I had done her would always be extremely pleaſing to me."

Here Mr. Cowper pauſing to drink a glaſs of water, the young folks made ſome remarks on what he had related. "Dear!" ſaid Emily, "I pity poor "Fanny; for I ſhould have been ſo un-"happy myſelf if I had been the cauſe "of the breaking of your arm."—"I "wonder," ſaid Arthurina, "what be-

"came

" came of the villain!" — " I dare " say," obſerved Arthur, " that he " was hanged afterwards for ſome crime " or other."—" I think," cried Arthur-William, " what a nice blow it " was Mr. Cowper gave him with his " head. O! how I ſhould liked to " have pounced him for pretty Fanny " Roſs!"—Mrs. Aubrey obſerved how clearly the interpoſition of Providence ſometimes appeared.—" It does," ſaid Mr. Cowper, with a ſigh; " but then, " alas! at other times, how unaccount- " able!" — " True, my friend," replied Aubrey; " but we ſhould pro- " bably be no gainers were the veil " conſtantly removed; we ſhould have " to look no farther than this life for " an explanation of the moral ſyſtem. " It ſeems to be the ſummit of a wiſe " benevolence in our preſent ſtate to " give ſufficient indications of a ſuper-

" intending Providence, yet to leave
" ſuch obſcurity as to compel us to
" place our chief hope on another
" world."

CHAP-

CHAPTER XVII.

Continuation of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory.

"I HOPE you were quite well at the "end of the fortnight," ſaid Emily to Mr. Cowper; who ſmiled at the hint of impatience, and reſumed his narrative. "In about a fortnight I thought myſelf perfectly well; but, though I was allowed to take exerciſe in the air, I was ordered to let it be gentle, and to keep my arm in a ſling. It has been obſerved, that he who has once put a plant into the earth, takes delight in watering it, in attending to it, in rearing it: ſo with the heart; the firſt kindneſs or ſervice rendered to a worthy object, though

gratuitous, induces repetition, and an intereſt in his welfare becomes naturally a gratification of the ſoul. The ſervice I had rendered Fanny Roſs endeared her to me; I felt anxious about her; and the firſt uſe I made of my liberty was to walk over to Melford, where I ſoon found the cottage in which ſhe and her mother lived.

"It ſtood alone on an elevated green, near a pretty brook, called the Mel. It was ſhaded by two large walnut trees and a wild cherry: a little up the brook was a ruſtic bridge, beneath which the ſtream fell in a beautiful ſilver ſheet over a rock, which ſeemed thrown by nature in its way to embelliſh the proſpect; it was a fine object from the village: the inhabitants had dammed the banks on each ſide even with it, to prevent the water paſſing round; and, to heighten the beauty, they had bent over it a tree

a tree growing on the bank; and, without ſpoiling the look of the uneven arch formed by it, had contrived to place a board, for a paſſage. On the farther ſide of the brook, there was a variety of trees, ſome ſmall, ſome majeſtic, planted for ſhades in the undulating paſtures of the rich *dairyiſts* of Gloceſterſhire; and to a great diſtance the eye was feaſted with the view of numerous herds of ſleek kine. The village ſtood on a gentle ſlope down the ſtream, which meandered from it, leaving it gradually on an eminence to the right. It was a kind of ſtraggling ſtreet, of which the cottages, though built in the common way, had a certain ſuperior air of neatneſs that beſpoke a greater degree of comfort reigning within them than is uſually found in the labouring claſs of men. At the bottom, but at a little diſtance from the ſtreet, was the church

and

and vicarage-houſe: the latter, though uninhabited, was commodious; the former was in the Gothic ſtile. From the end of the village, the cart-way ran along the ſide of a woody acclivity, and, about a mile off, croſſed the ſtream, which, after a ſerpentine courſe through the valley, interſected the road, and followed the curve of the hill."

"What a beautiful picture have you "drawn!" ſaid Mrs. Aubrey.—"I have been the more particular in deſcribing it," reſumed Mr. Cowper, "as I ſhall have to ſpeak more of it hereafter. Though I have now painted it to you, I did not ſtop long at the time to ſurvey it, but immediately went in to Dame Roſs's cottage, which was by far the largeſt and beſt in the village. Both mother and daughter were at home: the former being told who I was, became very warm in her acknowledgments, and

bleſſed

bleſſed me again and again; but what a difference was there in Fanny! her countenance no longer bore that ardent ſolicitude, no longer were her hands claſped in that extaſy of mingled gratitude and anguiſh, that had impreſſed her image on my mind, and led my fancy to form a thouſand romantic plans for her good: cold, diſtant, and reſerved, ſhe ſcarcely raiſed her eyes towards me; and when, following her mother's example, ſhe ſaid ſhe was glad to ſee me well, the blood ruſhed to her face as if ſhe had committed a crime. I felt at that moment a new ſenſation, which I certainly did not bring to the cottage with me; and, though I could not account for it, this coldneſs and reſerve awakened in me an anxiety to which till that moment I was a ſtranger. Though a cottager, and under a conſiderable obligation to me, I dreaded the loſs of her eſteem,

eſteem, and I would have gladly broken my arm again for ſuch another look as it had procured me before. No, it was not to be my lot; Fanny was coldly grateful, reſpectful, and grave. I made ſeveral attempts, by kind ſpeeches, to put her at her eaſe and obtain a ſmile, but in vain; ſhe maintained the ſame demeanour while I remained. As I left the cottage, however, I obſerved tears ſtart to her eyes; and I was perplexed the more to account for her behaviour. In my way back to Thornbury, ſhe entirely occupied my thoughts, and became afterwards almoſt the conſtant ſubject of them.

" Having been brought up altogether at a ſchool, the inſtructions I received related chiefly to claſſical knowledge; for, at theſe academies, all real knowledge of things, of ſociety, of the paſſions, virtues, vices, and general nature of

of man, is, as you know, left to be collaterally picked up how one can. Without thinking of love or marriage, or the difference of ſituations in life, I was, while a ſchool-boy, in love with Fanny Roſs. As I was not thought to be in any danger from the breaking of my arm, it had not been deemed neceſſary to inform my father of it till I was able to go out, and then I wrote to him myſelf about it, a few days before I took my walk to Melford. When I returned to the ſchool, I found a kind, affectionate anſwer from him, in which he told me that my maſter had pronounced me ſufficiently prepared to change from the ſchool to the univerſity; and that a friend of his, then at Briſtol, would in a few days call for me, and bring me up to town with him. This intelligence, which three weeks before would have been the moſt pleaſing I could receive,

now

now filled me with consternation. I was wretched at the thought of never more seeing Fanny Ross. I walked towards Melford the very next day; but, as I approached the village, I recollected the solemnity of my reception the day before, and was deterred from proceeding to the cottage. The same recollection kept me in a state of irresolution till my father's friend arrived, and I quitted the country without another sight of Fanny.

"My father received me with great affection; but he was not of a communicative disposition on any subject, and least of all on his affairs. He lived with some splendor, possessing a considerable fortune, chiefly personal. My mother had been dead some years, leaving him a widower with two children, my sister and myself. He told me that, having had from my master an excellent character of me, he would not confine

confine me with a tutor at the univerſity; but that I ſhould myſelf make my choice of the aſſiſtance I might want in the purſuit of my ſtudies; that, to enable me to provide myſelf with whatever was neceſſary to complete them, and at the ſame time to live like a gentleman, my allowance ſhould be liberal, that it ſhould be four hundred a-year; and, if that did not ſuffice, he would make it five: all he requeſted was that I ſhould be ſtrictly juſt in all dealings, and form rich and reſpectable connexions; hinting that, with a good perſon, manners, liberal expences, and conduct, I might look high among the daughters of wealth and rank for a wife. When he mentioned Cambridge to me, I expreſſed a preference for Oxford; becauſe I reflected on its being ſo much nearer to Melford: but, for a reaſon which he did not then tell me, and which I afterwards

wards learned was his ſometimes living incognito himſelf in the neighbourhood of the latter, he made it a point with me to go to Cambridge.

" Having filled my pockets with money, he adviſed me, before I went to the univerſity, to go and pay a viſit to my ſiſter, who was at his country-houſe near Reading, with an elderly lady, a diſtant relation, who, ſince my mother's death, had kept my father's houſe, and under whoſe protection my ſiſter had received education from proper perſons. This I was happy to do, as I longed to ſee my ſiſter; and accordingly, after ſpending ſome days with him, I took leave of him and ſet out for Reading. I loved my ſiſter; but, to tell the truth, I thought on the way only of Fanny Roſs, and it came into my head to divide my viſit between them. I ſtaid three days in Berkſhire; and then, pretending a wiſh

to

to ſee an old ſchoolfellow who lived near Marlborough, I ſet out unattended acroſs the country, and, avoiding Thornbury, I went by a circuitous route to Berkley, where I took up my quarters. On the very day of my arrival, an incident occurred really worthy of a romance, and, if I had but a book in my hand, you might think I was reading you a novel.

" After refreſhing myſelf at the inn, I ſet out with the deſign of walking to Melford, which is but two miles farther from Berkley, acroſs the fields, than it is from Thornbury. About half-way, at a little diſtance from me, on the foot-track, I obſerved ſomething which, as I approached it, looked like a book; and gueſs my ſurpriſe, on taking it up, to find it my own Virgil, which I loſt on the day I fought for Fanny Roſs, and which I had never thought of after. What aſtoniſhed me was the neat caſe it had

had got, and the high ſtate of preſervation it was in. Opening it, I found my name thus written by myſelf, *E libris Caroli Cowper*; and beneath this appeared, new to me, and in a hand leſs free, *Charles Cowper, his book; God bleſs him.* I was ſitting on a ſtile, examining the leaf, when the ſound of ſome one approaching attracted my notice: I looked towards Melford, and ſaw a young woman, whom I ſoon perceived to be Fanny, in the ſame dreſs ſhe had on, the day I firſt ſaw her.

" Unwilling that ſhe ſhould know me till ſhe was quite cloſe, I ſlipped off the ſtile, and walked ſlowly along the croſs-hedge with the Virgil in my hand. I had made but a very few paces, when running, and out of breath, ſhe was at my heels.—' That's my book, ſir,' cried ſhe, panting violently.—' And do ' you read Latin, Fanny?' ſaid I, turning

ing round. I cannot give you an adequate idea of her face and form when she recognized me. Surprise rushed into her countenance; she continued panting, and was turning to fly away. This I caught her in time to prevent. 'Sure you don't know me, Fanny,' said I, 'or you would not run from me.' This remark restored her recollection, and I saw that it told her she had betrayed herself. She cast her eyes to the ground, a slight blush tinged her forehead; on her *cheek* a slight blush could not be seen; a smile, half forced half natural, displayed her beautiful teeth; she handled the flounce of her apron, and, dropping a curtesy with something more of grace than rustics usually do, said: 'Bless me! who should have 'thought of seeing you here, Mr. Cow-'per? I heard you were gone from 'Thornbury long ago.'—'Yes,' said

I,

I, 'I went away; but I am come back 'on purpoſe to ſee you, Fanny.'— 'Bleſs me, Mr. Cowper,' cried ſhe, 'how can you ſay ſo!'—'I ſhould have 'come to ſee you again before I went 'away,' ſaid I, 'only you did not ap- 'pear glad to ſee me the time I did 'come. Why was not you glad to ſee 'me?'—'Indeed,' replied ſhe, 'I was 'glad, but —'—'But what, Fanny?' —'Pray don't aſk me,' ſaid ſhe: 'you 'know you are a gentleman; and ſo 'Dick Cowſel's father, one of our 'neighbours, told my mother; and that 'I ſhould not go to Thornbury myſelf 'to aſk after your arm; and that it was 'not proper for a young woman to be 'too thankful to a gentleman: but I 'can't for my ſoul ſee why a poor girl 'ſhould not be as grateful as any body 'elſe; and, to ſay the truth, I think I 'have more learning than Dick Cow-

'ſel's

'sel's father, though he is a very good 'man; and I know he had a ſpite at me 'for refuſing Dick laſt Thornbury fair, 'and ſaid I was proud, becauſe I had 'been told that I had gentle blood in my 'veins; for they ſay that my father's 'father's father was a gentleman, yes 'indeed, and came from the North; 'and that it was through honeſt miſ-'fortunes that our family fell away, and 'was obliged to work: yes, indeed, 'and my own father uſed to ſpeak as if 'he was a gentleman, and yet he was 'not proud. No more am I, I aſſure 'you; for, after all, what is blood but 'blood? and it is the heart, and not 'the blood, which makes people bet-'ter or worſe.'

"This genuine ſimplicity, this noble-neſs of nature alone, would have won my heart, but former events had already captivated me, and, to know that Fan-

ny's coldneſs and reſerve had been the reſult of compulſion, gave me unſpeakable pleaſure. 'You are right, Fanny,' ſaid I, 'one good heart is worth more 'than a thouſand empty names; and 'ſuch a girl as you more than all the 'artificial babies that faſhion can pro-'duce.'—'Dear me, Mr. Cowper,' cried ſhe, 'I did not think you would 'banter me ſo.'—'I do not banter you: 'but tell me, Fanny,' ſaid I, pointing to the name that had been written on the leaf of my Virgil after I loſt it, 'did 'you write this?' She bluſhed and heſitated. 'Perhaps,' continued I, 'you 'got Dick Cowſel to write it.'—'Dick 'Cowſel!' cried ſhe, laughing:—it was the firſt time I had ſeen her laugh; and I ſaw that nature had endowed her chearful emotions with as much grace as her mournful ones.—'Dick Cowſel! 'if I could not have done it myſelf, I 'ſhould

'ſhould never have thought of aſking 'Dick Cowſel: Dick's no ſcholar; but 'he is a very good young man though.' —'And not a bit the worſe,' ſaid I, 'for loving you: but, if you wrote this 'with your own hand, Fanny, I hope 'you mean to be as good as your word, 'and not to pray without meaning; 'what you pray for you can give.'

"Fanny did not exactly underſtand me; ſhe looked confounded; a ſlight frown brought the inner points of her eye-brows a little nearer to each other. She ſeemed to recollect her ſituation. 'Dear me!' ſhe exclaimed, 'what am 'I about? I ſhould be at home by this!' —'Won't you anſwer me?' ſaid I.— 'Sir!'—Oh! how independent of fortune and of rank is the dignity of Virtue! all things elſe they may embelliſh and ennoble; but Virtue carries its inherent nobility into every boſom, wherever

found, and is as glorious in the peaſant as the prince. Fanny's monoſyllable poſſeſſed the dignity of virtue; it was ſufficiently emphatic, without being bold. Impreſſed with notions of the difference of ſituation, her humility led her to imagine that virtuous love was not to be expected from a gentleman. I immediately undeceived her. 'Can you,' cried I, 'ſuſpect for a moment that, 'after ſaving, I would deſtroy you? It 'would be aſking a curſe, Fanny, not a 'bleſſing. The way to bleſs me is to 'be my wife.'—'What!' cried ſhe, 'your virtuous wife! Oh, no, I can 'never hope for that!' I had ſome difficulty to convince her that I was ſerious; but at laſt, in the innocence of her heart, ſhe confeſſed that I had been conſtantly in her thoughts; that ſhe had found and ſecreted my Virgil for love of me; and that ſhe could conceive no happi-

happineſs whatever equal to that of being my wife.

" Notwithſtanding this, I ſaw a degree of compunction poiſoning her pleaſure, in the comparative view ſhe took of our ſituations and of her own defective education. With reſpect to the former, I put her in mind of her own reaſoning, and perſuaded her that happineſs was the reſult of love and virtue, without reference to rank; and as for the latter, I told her, that I would undertake in a ſhort time to put her upon a par with the beſt-educated of her ſex, and that no employment on earth could be ſo delightful to me. ' Dear ' me!' exclaimed the innocent, lovely girl, ' how happy we might be in read- ' ing and learning all day long! and ' then, as to the matter of gentility, I ' I know I am ſure if you could find ' out, that I come of a very good family. ' Isn't there a great houſe in London

'where every body's family is wrote 'down in big rolls of paper and large 'books with painted arms? I remem-'ber hearing my father say that my 'grandfather told him that our family 'was there.'—I made her happy by saying, that I would inquire when I went to town: but that, whether it was or was not so, I did not care; for that, in my opinion, a virtuous woman was far above rubies.—'Dear me!' said she, 'that's 'a verse in the Proverbs of Solomon; 'it is in the last chapter; I can say 'from that verse to the end by heart; 'shall I say it to you?'—'Do,' replied I, 'and let us walk on towards Mel-'ford.' Her heart fluttered with de-light at the opportunity she found to convince me that she had some learning; and beginning with, 'Who can find a 'virtuous woman, for her price is above 'rubies,' she repeated to the end of the chapter,

chapter, blushing, and watching, in frequent glances, the approbation of my countenance. When she had done, I could not help throwing my arms round her and kissing her; at which she grew angry, and said, 'Now, don't you do that 'again, Mr. Cowper, unless you want 'to quarrel with me.' I assured her I would not: 'but, Fanny,' said I, 'what 'you have been repeating is both family 'and fortune to you; and, if you will 'promise to be my wife, you will make 'me happy.' Her answer was, that I must ask her mother; for, as to what she herself would do, it was as plain as if she had spoken it.

"I see, my kind friends," said Mr. Cowper, interrupting his narrative, "that "you are not tired of my circumstantial "detail: I rejoice at it; for, in recall-"ing these events of my life, I feel my-"self impelled to dwell upon them with

" a minuteneſs approaching to their real-
" ity: but I muſt, however, be more
" brief, or I ſhall have to poſtpone the
" reſt of my ſtory till we meet at Mari-
" ton, as I have ſo little time left me in
" town.

" Fanny," continued he, " having in-
nocently and undeſignedly ſhown me
how favourable her heart was to me, I
made uſe of it to obviate all her objec-
tions, and to prevail upon her to aſſiſt
me in accompliſhing our union, in which
leſs difficulty occurred than I feared; for
I conceived that her mother would re-
quire my father's conſent, and pique
Fanny's pride into a reſolution not to
marry without it. In this, however, I
was miſtaken: the old lady had indeed
diſcovered her daughter's inclination
while I was confined at Thornbury by
my broken arm; and, having conſulted
her neighbour Cowſel, had prevented her

con-

continuing to call daily, and had given her the leſſon of reſerve which ſhe had practiſed at the viſit I made them; but this had only been in conſequence of her not conceiving it poſſible that I could return her love honourably, and ſhe was very anxious for the preſervation of her daughter's innocence and happineſs.

" Giving Fanny her Virgil, I ſent her on to tell her mother what had paſſed between us; and I determined to go and talk to her neighbour Cowſel myſelf. Though ſhe called Cowſel her neighbour, he lived full half a mile from her up the river, and rented ſome acres of paſturage, on which he had a few cows, that ſupplied his dairy; and Cowſel, in a ſmall way, was a thriving man. On entering his houſe, I was agreeably ſurpriſed to find myſelf received by the old man with a ſmile. ' Walk in, Mr.

'Cowper,' ſaid he, 'walk in; I be 'quite alone: my dame, with Dick and 'Suſan, be all gone to Thornbury the-'day; but they 'ull be back by and by. 'I be glad to ſee you, and always ſhall; 'for I love a good action to my ſoul, 'and I have loved you ever ſin' you 'fought for Fanny Roſs. But I thought 'you was gone, Maſter Cowper, I thought 'you was gone. What brings you again 'into theſe parts?'—Glad of ſo fortunate an opportunity of unburdening my mind, I immediately anſwered him with a queſtion to the point: 'Can't you 'gueſs, farmer?'—'Hum! I don't like 'to gueſs,' replied Cowſel; 'I have 'too much reſpect for you to gueſs the 'only thing that could leſſen it; the 'only thing I can think of that could 'bring you from London to Melford.' —'Though I am ſure you have gueſſed 'very right, farmer,' ſaid I, 'yet I 'hope

'hope you won't like me the worſe. 'Would you have me be a ſtock or a 'ſtone, without feeling?'—'I would have 'you be an honourable man, young gen-'tleman,' replied he; 'and, let me tell 'you, that won't be, if what I gueſs be 'right.'—'Come, my good friend,' ſaid I, 'don't let Fanny's refuſal of 'Dick prejudice you againſt me.'—'Her refuſal of Dick prejudice me!' cried Cowſel; 'why, you don't know 'me, Maſter Cowper: I let Dick, poor 'toad, aſk her the queſtion, to ſatisfy 'hiſſelf; but, Lord bleſs your heart! 'Fanny Roſs be fitter for a ſquire than 'for Dick. Beſides, my boy had only 'neighbour's fare: why, ſhe has re-'fuſed all the young men in the pariſh; 'and, to tell you my mind, that's the 'only thing I diſlike in Fanny: ſhe is 'as proud as Lucifer; I mean as to a 'huſband; for, as to every thing elſe,

'nobody can be more humble. As for 'refuſing Dick, ſhe was in the right; I 'knew ſhe would: but, when ſhe goes 'to refuſe men of property, as I know 'ſhe has, confound her pride; I think 'ſhe be mad, to prefer twiddling and 'twiſting her fingers to make lace.'

"I need not tell you how delighted I was at this account of Fanny. 'By 'Heaven! Cowſel,' cried I, 'ſhe is 'the moſt beautiful creature I ever ſaw.' —'She be,' replied he; 'I allow it: 'but remember this, Maſter Cowper, 'you have rendered her a ſervice; and, 'if you take advantage of it to injure 'her —'—'I injure her! farmer,' exclaimed I.—'No, no,' continued he, 'I don't think you would deſignedly: 'but, any how, it would be ſuch a ſin, 'I ſhould hate you as much as I love 'and reſpect you now.'—'Farmer,' ſaid I, warmly, 'give me your hand; 'and,

'and, if ever I injure her, may God 'forſake me!'—'Said like yourſelf,' cried he, ſhaking my hand heartily; 'ſaid like the protector of innocence: 'but now, my worthy young gentle-'man, take an old man's advice in this 'matter. I ſee you would not willingly 'bite at the Devil's hook; but don't 'you now, don't you truſt yourſelf to 'nibble at the bait: take my advice, 'I ſay; to the right about wheel; go 'back to London, and forget Fanny 'Roſs.'—'Forget Fanny Roſs!' I exclaimed, 'I muſt firſt forget to ſee, to 'hear, to feel, to breathe: tell me, 'farmer, to forget all the functions of 'life, but not to forget Fanny Roſs!'

"Cowſel looked grave and was ſilent; but when I opened my mind to him, which I immediately did, he ſmiled, and told me I was too good for this world. 'Fanny,' ſaid he, 'deſerves you, and

'I ſhould

'I ſhould be happy to ſee her your
'wife; but what will your friends ſay?'
—'Farmer,' replied I, 'as they don't
'know Fanny Roſs ſo well as you and
'I do, I don't mean to aſk them till, ſay
'what they will, they can't part us.
'When we are married, they will find
'out her worth; but, if I ſay a word
'before-hand, they will call me mad,
'and my Fanny mean.'—'They may
'be miſtaken though,' ſaid Cowſel;
'for the girl, for aught I know, is as
'well born as yourſelf. I knew her
'poor father; an induſtrious, broken-
'hearted creature, that laid by all his
'little ſcrapings together to teach his
'daughter reading and writing, and
'buy an annuity for her and her mo-
'ther, in caſe of his death; for he al-
'ways ſaid he ſhould not live long.
'Maſter Cowper, I am not for levelling
'diſtinctions; but this I muſt ſay, that,

if I

'if I was the firſt lord in the land, and 'you was my own and only ſon, you 'ſhould have my full conſent to marry 'Fanny; for I know her, I know every 'ſtring of her heart, and I know ſhe 'would make the man ſhe marries 'happy, be his ſtation what it might.'

"Finding in Cowſel ſentiments like theſe, it was not difficult for me to make him my friend; but I was afraid of Dick, as I could hardly hope to make a friend of a rival. His father, however, put me at my eaſe, by telling me that his ſon's heart was not made of ſtuff to be broke; but that, like the reſt of Fanny's lovers, he had, on rejection, directed the ardour of his paſſion to another object, with whom he was likely to be more ſucceſsful. By convincing Cowſel of my diſintereſted and honourable views, I completely won his affection. He confeſſed he had warned her mother

mother againſt me, and had been the cauſe of Fanny's not continuing her inquiries for me at Thornbury; but that he would now be my friend with the old woman. 'Yet,' ſaid he, 'there is one 'thing to be conſidered; you mayn't be 'independent of your friends; and, if 'they ſhould be ſo diſpleaſed as to for-'ſake you, how will you maintain a 'family?'—'They will never forſake 'me,' ſaid I, 'for marrying Fanny Roſs; 'but I have even thought how to pro-'vide againſt that. I have no ambition 'to be great: before I diſcloſe my mar-'riage I will, out of my income, put a 'ſufficient ſum into your hands to ſtock 'a good range of paſture; from you I 'will learn the care of cattle; and my 'Fanny and I will make cheeſe enough 'to feed all our little ones, and as many 'more.'—'God's bleſſing on you!' ſaid he, ſmiling; 'it cheers my heart to hear

'you

'you talk so wisely. It is such a youth
'as you that ought to be the husband of
'Fanny Ross; and her husband you shall
'be.'

"I lost no time in improving the fortunate impression I had made on the farmer's mind, but begged him to go with me immediately to her mother. We found our work already half done by the representations of her daughter; and Cowsel repeating my proposal and my plan, accompanied with his own hearty approbation, the preliminaries were soon settled. The banns were to be regularly published at the parish church; and that I might, as to residence, comply with the requisition of the law, Cowsel offered me a room in his house. This offer, you will believe, I readily accepted, and promised to become his inmate in the course of the week. I then took my leave, hastened to

Berkley,

Berkley, threw myſelf into a poſt-chaiſe, and was in London early next day. My point was to obtain my father's permiſſion to ſpend a month before I went to Cambridge with my friend at Marlborough, Ned Neville; you remember him at Cambridge, Aubrey? and it was no ſooner aſked than granted. He made me an offer of one of his ſervants; but I declined it, ſaying I preferred hiring one in the country. I packed up clothes and every thing which I thought I ſhould want: nor did I forget books, maps, paper, pens, pencils, a good microſcope, and ſeveral other optical inſtruments. I ſtaid but one day in town, the next I ſpent in Berkſhire with my ſiſter, and the day following with my friend in Wiltſhire. Knowing I could depend upon him, I made him my confident, and ſettled the channel of all correſpondence and communication through his hands,

hands, ſo that there was no danger of my plan being detected. I then once more took my circuitous route to Berkley; and, after an abſence of five days, found myſelf moſt delightfully ſettled in a pleaſant room, at the houſe of the friendly farmer."

Here Mr. Cowper pauſing, Aubrey took the opportunity of ringing the bell, to order ſome refreſhments; and, while Cæſar was gone for ſweetmeats, cakes, and wine, Mr. Cowper deſiſted from his narrative, leaving an interval which the party filled up with obſervations on Fanny Roſs's beauty and character, and on the pictureſque ſcenery of her native village.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XVIII.

Continuation of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory.

AFTER a few minutes devoted to the repaſt brought by Cæſar, Mr. Cowper proceeded thus: "You have been very "good to me, my friends; for, I con- "feſs, that, inſtead of remarks of the "nature you have beſtowed on my "ſtory, I expected ſome reflexions on "the duplicity of my conduct towards "an indulgent father."—"I think," ſaid Aubrey, "that your own reflexions "at the beginning were ſufficient to di- "vert all ſeverity of cenſure."—"It left "us nothing to ſay againſt you, Mr. "Cowper," ſaid Arthur: "I am ſure "you would never have deceived him, "if

" if he had made himself your friend as
" well as your father."—" You are
" right, my dear boy," said Mr. Cowper; " I should have been as incapable
" of veiling my heart from him as you
" from your father; and, in meditating
" on my life, I am less severe on myself
" for a breach of filial confidence than
" for the act of duplicity itself; all de-
" ceit, all hypocrisy, are offences of the
" blackest dye against the pure, grand
" Source of Truth. I early became so
" sensible of this, that the slightest want
" of candour appeared to me the chief
" badge by which we might distinguish
" those vicious spirits that are under the
" dominion of the Father of Falsehood:
" but it was not till I had severely felt
" the effects of it that I became alive to
" the horror with which it has ever
" since inspired me. I will not preach
" candour to you, my dear children, for

" you

" you need no ſermon on the ſubject;
" but, as you advance in life, you will
" invariably obſerve diſingenuouſneſs to
" be the cement of miſery and vice.
" To go on with my ſtory:

" My friendly farmer had employed the time of my abſence not only in intereſting his own family, but the whole pariſh in Fanny's happineſs and mine; and, to complete the acquiſition of their good will, I went among the neighbours and made myſelf as agreeable to them as I poſſibly could; ſo that, when our names were proclaimed on the enſuing Sunday, the publication was heard throughout the congregation without ſurpriſe. As to the clergyman; you muſt know, that the vicar of Melford having been for ſome time in a very precarious ſtate of health, had, by the advice of his phyſicians, gone on a voyage to a ſouthern climate; and the curate

who

who performed the duty of the parish was a young man, whose father lived at Berkley, and with whom, on a principle of frugality, he chose to reside. He did not know half of the parishoners; and the names of Charles Cowper and Frances Ross passed his lips with as much indifference as those of John Doe and Richard Roe issue from the mouth of a lawyer.

" Every thing seemed to favour our union; and, as I already looked upon Fanny as my wife, I made the most of the intervening weeks in cultivating her ideas and talents: I considered her as a beautiful, unclassed wild-flower, that I was transplanting into the garden of MIND; and no florist ever took such delight in varying the streaks of his tulip, or in multiplying and enriching the petals of his carnation, as I in expanding the knowledge and cultivating the understanding

ſtanding of my intellectual bloſſom. To teach thoſe we love is a paſſion natural to the human breaſt; it is ſtrongeſt in young minds, and even children we ſee poſſeſs it. I had learned much, and I had a great deal to learn; but I was ſufficiently advanced to be Fanny's tutor; and, were I to recommend an improvement in the art of making love, it would be that it ſhould commence with the lover's being the tutor of his miſtreſs in the rudiments of ſome of the ſciences.

"Before our probationary weeks elapſed, my lovely pupil read the Spectator fluently, and ſeldom failed in the orthography of common words; but then, remember ſhe had learned to read and write before. Nor did ſhe alone profit by my affection for her: for the ſake of prudent appearances, as well as friendſhip, Suſan Cowſel was very often,

if not always with us; and Susan improved by my lectures: Susan was a good girl, and afterwards married and settled well. Her brother Dick and I soon became friends; and Dick too, I flatter myself, was not the worse for my conversation: but, to do justice to the whole parish, I must say that there was a something in the understanding and manners of its inhabitants which, like the countenance of their country, and the neatness of their village, exalted them in my mind. It was a something that clearly evinced a pervading influence of soul: the very villagers had a sober self-respect, unmixed with arrogance in their demeanour, a justness of thinking on the subjects to which their thinking extended, and a kindness in their manners that more than supplied the place of urbanity. I thought so then, and I never afterwards altered my opinion.

" Struck with this effect, when the abatement of more vivid contemplations permitted it to recur to my mind, I was led to inquire for a cauſe, and I found a very natural one: for three ſucceſſive generations, the pariſh of Melford had been bleſſed with vicars of a truly paſtoral character; and the actual incumbent, whom the pariſhioners had in a body petitioned to yield to the advice of his phyſicians, and go abroad, to ſave his life and gain new health, was the ſucceſſor of his father; for the preſentation of the vicarage belonged to an elder branch of the family. The venerable vicar whom he ſucceeded had lived upwards of forty years among them: as he grew old, his ſon acted as his curate; and they had both, with apoſtolic ſincerity and ardour, devoted themſelves to the care of the ſouls entruſted to them. They did not confine their miniſtry to a cold

a cold reading of the Liturgy, and weekly common-place expoſitions of obſcure texts; they did not even deem preaching and praying their principal duty. The going to church they conſidered as periodical meetings for the purpoſe of general praiſe, thankſgiving, and ſupplication; and the ſermon as a lecture read by the father of a family: but they were far from conſidering it as the beſt opportunity of rectifying the underſtanding, improving the hearts, and forming the ſouls of their pariſhioners for ſalvation. The chief ſervice they rendered them was through the means of friendly condeſcenſion and familiar talk. The doctrines of their Bible were not neatly put by to be neatly produced on ſet occaſions; but the precepts of their Maſter, his life, and death, the ſtate of mankind, and the neceſſity of induſtry, were inculcated in private in

an eaſy, chearful manner; as a kind phyſician explains the nature of his friend's malady, and the qualities of the medicine which he preſcribes for his reſtoration. They ſowed the ſeeds of true religion and ſound ſenſe, without mixing the grains of enthuſiaſm. They evinced the intereſt of laying up a treaſure in another life, from the certainty of leaving this; but, at the ſame time, inculcated honeſt employment in this as one of the means of amaſſing that treaſure; and taught, that the exceſſive fervour which was unfavourable to temporal duties, was, in that very reſpect, unfavourable alſo to eternal hopes. In ſhort, the inhabitants of Melford, their fathers and their children, had been ſo tutored by their amiable and eſtimable miniſters, that the natural glow of the human mind, neither producing on the one hand an independent arrogance,

nor,

nor, on the other, running into imaginary fervours and superstition, had formed, if I may so express myself, that humble dignity of soul which marked the character of my fellow-parishioners, and in which, I hope, they are not singular. But I digress, Aubrey, and usurp your province."—"The observation," said Aubrey, "conveys a reproach "which I deserve; but I mean to re-"form, Cowper: Oh! that, instead of "looking forward to Aubrey-Hall, I "had early trod in the footsteps of the "vicars of Melford! but Mariton shall "be another Melford."—"Bless you!" said Mr. Cowper, "Mariton is one of "the most fashionable places in the "whole country."—"But pray, Mr. "Cowper," said Arthur-William, "what became of Fanny Ross all this "time?" The whole group laughed at Arthur-William's question. "My

" dear fellow," ſaid Mr. Cowper, delighted with his attention, " ſhe was " making her wedding-clothes." — " Oh! then," cried Arthur-William, " you are going to be married ſoon " now!"—Mr. Cowper gazed at him fondly. Arthur-William's preſent tenſe had in view the action of the ſtory; to Mr. Cowper it reſtored the actual proſpect of unſpent happineſs. " Dear " boy!" ſaid he, with an emotion which he ſubdued as it roſe; " yes, our " wedding-day approached; and Fanny " was buſy in preparing her dreſs for " the occaſion.

" I had brought from London with me ſome laces and muſlins, of different patterns, to make her gowns, and ſome drawings of faſhions to guide her in making them; but, — oh! how juſtly had nature framed her mind! — though ſhe admired them, ſhe perſuaded me to give

give up the idea of her becoming ſuddenly fine, and to allow her to chooſe herſelf what ſhe ſhould wear. It was the moſt modeſt, the moſt becoming dreſs I ever ſaw; it was plain, and not richer than that which her companion and bride-maid, Suſan Cowſel, wore on the occaſion: it is eaſily deſcribed, being merely a white gown, differing from her old ones only in the make, which ſhe conſented, at my requeſt, to copy from the Grecian mode of one of my drawings. She wore a ſtraw-hat, which, as well as her gown, was decorated with white ribbons; and, on her neck, was a coral necklace. I have already painted Fanny to you, and I ſhall now leave you to dreſs her in her bridal-garments; I ſhall only ſay, that the emotion of gratitude in her countenance was now unmixed with pain; another ſtill more powerful auxiliary of

beauty had taken its place, and that was love attended with joy; it beamed from her lips, it gliſtened in her eyes, it animated every motion. Artleſs, devoid of vanity, glowing with benevolent affections, my Fanny was the moſt beautiful creature I ever ſaw. Our wedding-day was a feſtival to the whole pariſh. Young Cowſel and his ſiſter were the bride-man and bride-maid; ſeveral handſome young women, clad in white, attended Fanny to church; old Cowſel gave her away; the curate bleſſed us, and the bleſſing was echoed from one end of the pariſh to the other. I was the happieſt of human beings.

"Soon after my marriage, it was neceſſary for me to return to town, and proceed to enter my name at Cambridge. I left Fanny under the care of her mother and Cowſel, and ſet out to take every precaution neceſſary for enſuring the concealment

cealment of my marriage, and the ſucceſs of my plan. Inſtead of going directly to London, I went to Marlborough, in order to conſult my friend Neville, who was alſo on the eve of going to the ſame univerſity, the head of his family poſſeſſing the hereditary eſtate in an adjacent county. Having fully unboſomed myſelf to Neville, he obtained his father's conſent to proceed to town with me, on my promiſe to accompany him to his uncle's, and thence to college.

" Old Mr. Neville having told his ſon that he meant to allow him a ſum of money to furniſh a library, I took advantage of this in London, to get from my father a ſum for the ſame purpoſe. His diſpoſition was very liberal, and he deſired me not to be niggardly in the purchaſe of books. He was happy that I was to accompany Neville, and recom-

mended to me to make use of his connexions in establishing myself in the university; for, though he had purposed to accompany me, and introduce me to some friends in the neighbourhood of Cambridge, he preferred the opportunity which offered, both as it led to superior connexion, and saved him a jaunt for which he had but little time. When we took leave of him, he put a hundred pound bank-note in my hand, for my quarter's allowance, which he told me should be always paid in advance. He then gave me a draft on his banker for three hundred pounds, which he said was for my books when I was fixed. I was extremely grateful to my father for this liberality; and my gratitude was on the point of betraying my secret, when the effusion of it was checked by my recollection of the injunctions I had before received from him, which, you remember,

ber, were crowned with the hope of my finding a wife among the rich and the great. I contented myſelf, therefore, with thanking him warmly, and ſet out with Neville for Biggleſwade, where we ſpent two days; and, on the third, were accompanied to Cambridge by his uncle, who recommended us to perſons of influence.

" We were fortunately ſettled together at Trinity, in rooms ſufficiently commodious for us both, and the more ſo, as it was my intention to be as little at college as poſſible. As ſoon as we were left to ourſelves, I digeſted my plan with Neville, whoſe friendſhip, which had hitherto veiled my clandeſtine happineſs, was now to guard me in my bleſt obſcurity. I told him, that I did not mean to devote one farthing of my three hundred pound draft to books; and he agreed, if ever my father ſhould

come to Cambridge, to let his library paſs for mine: he was alſo to be the channel of my correſpondence with my family; and, if any friend of my father's unexpectedly called, he was to give ſome conſiſtent account of my abſence, and forward immediate intelligence to me. You may be ſure I ſtaid no longer at Trinity than was neceſſary to ſettle my plan: as ſoon as I had kept my firſt term, I ſhook hands with Neville, gave up Granta to the aſſiduities of mathematical geniuſes and poetical imaginations, and flew on the wings of love to Melford.

"What a dream of happineſs! nor was it very tranſient; it laſted—but I will not anticipate—it *was* happineſs;—it now appears but a dream. I will not dwell upon it; but when I look back, even at this day, I think it was rational happineſs. My time was chiefly ſpent in

in improving Fanny, and increaſing my own knowledge; nor do I think I loſt much by tutoring inſtead of being tutored. On my return to Melford, my thoughts were bent on ſecuring ſome proviſion for Fanny, that ſhould defy all caprice of temper or fortune; and, at the ſame time, I was determined that my family ſhould receive her as my wife: but theſe were things that could not take place at once; and Fanny was not only convinced that it was better to delay making the confeſſion, as I had ſtated to Cowſel, but wiſhed it for another reaſon, which was, that it would render her fitter to converſe with her ſiſter-in-law: and, as for the honour of being noticed, it had never entered her head; for her views ſtrayed not beyond the bounds of real happineſs.

" Meanwhile, to their great joy, I imparted

imparted to Fanny and her mother, and alſo to our friend farmer Cowſel, my intention of ſecuring a laſting habitation at Melford, be my fortune in life what it might. Mrs. Roſs's cottage ſtood on a little eminence, commanding ſuch pictureſque ſcenery, that I had, from the firſt moment of my certainty of Fanny's heart, caſt my eyes upon it, as a ſpot to be improved and dedicated to love and happineſs. With Cowſel's advice and aſſiſtance, I purchaſed it and about ſix acres of land round it. The purchaſe-money I paid after my next trip to Cambridge, when I returned with my ſecond quarter's allowance and the caſh for my father's draft, two hundred pounds of which I put into Cowſel's hands for my wife.

" As we lived well upon the half of my income, for love can live well upon a little,

a little, I laid out four hundred pounds in extending our cottage and beautifying the ground about it. I did not ſcruple to take my father at his word, in reſpect to the ſum for books, and, in one of my trips to Cambridge, I drew upon him for an additional two hundred pounds. Building, gardening, and mental cultivation, ſo occupied my Fanny and me, that the world was nothing to us, and we conceived all bliſs to concentrate in loving, raiſing ſhrubs and flowers, laying out walks, contriving viſtas, and enlarging and diverſifying our ideas. In the firſt year our happineſs was increaſed by the birth of a daughter. Here was a new ſenſation for us! to tell you what I felt on finding myſelf a father is impoſſible; and to you, Aubrey, would be needleſs. Fanny's feelings on becoming a mother were perhaps ſtill more exquiſite; and our little girl called forth in both

both of us thoſe ſweet ſenſations Nature kindles in the breaſts of parents. We had her chriſtened Frances. From the rapid progreſs of her cooing, ſmiling, and walking, in the firſt year of her life, we thought her a wonder, and we called her little Miracle.

" It was when my child was about fourteen months old that my father informed me of his being adviſed to go and reſide for ſome time in a more ſouthern climate, and of his intention to take my ſiſter with him: however, my plan of diſcovering my ſituation was not mature, and I ſuffered them to take leave of me, without breathing a word upon the ſubject. My father told me that my income ſhould continue to be regularly paid; but, at the ſame time, hinted to me, that he ſhould not be ſorry to hear that I was in the good graces of one of the

the Miſs Nevilles, who were both girls of large fortune."

" I wonder," cried Arthur-William, " that he did not find you out before he " went."—" So do I, Mr. Cowper," ſaid Mrs. Aubrey; " for your old maſ- " ter at Thornbury muſt have known " of your marriage; and one would " think that he would have conceived " it his duty to inform your father of it." —" I did not think of mentioning the " lecture I received from him on the " occaſion," replied Mr. Cowper; " but " he talked to me pretty roundly, I aſ- " ſure you. He did not, however, know " of it till it was too late to interfere to " any good purpoſe; and he was too " rational not to ſee the propriety of my " plan of temporary concealment: of " courſe, he remained ſilent from a good " motive."—" I cannot help wiſhing," ſaid Arthur, " that your father had

" known

" known it before you parted."—" It is " the wiſh of a pure heart," ſaid Mr. Cowper, " and moſt devoutly do I now " wiſh it too. What miſery would it not " have ſaved me! You will perhaps pity " me, my dear young friend, when you " hear, as you will preſently, how dearly " I have expiated this want of candour."

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIX.

Continuation of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory.

"My father's abſence from England," ſaid Mr. Cowper, reſuming his narrative, "encreaſed the ſecurity of my ſecret, and I completely reſigned myſelf to the full ſtream of happineſs, ſo early my lot in life. Fanny, by the progreſs of her mind, daily improved her charms; and her delight in the tender offices of a mother endeared her more and more to my heart. Our little dominions flouriſhed, the grounds were already clothed by the riſing of the ſhrubs which we had planted, and, while our fruit-trees, our firs, willows, ſycamores, and elms, were making their flower

flower progreſs, the protection of the walnut-trees and wild cherry furniſhed enough of the ſublime of vegetable ſcenery to the cottage, which was now a commodious little habitation. To the original cot, I had added a ſimple building of two ſtories, with a bow in front, ſlightly curved; and to this building I had joined the counterpart of the original cot: the little wings were dedicated to bed-chambers and offices; and the middle was formed into a hall, parlour, and a room of conſiderable ſize up ſtairs. The architecture was rural, and our furniture uſeful, plain, and cheap. The outſide of our habitation was picturesque: the curved centre appeared handſome, in white plaiſter between the two ſides, which looked like bowers; jeſſamines, honey-ſuckles, and other luxuriant plants being trained every where about them; for Fanny had already

ready learned to delight in the bower of Adam and Eve."—"What! that," ſaid Arthur-William, "where there was "laurel and myrtle, roſes and jaſmines?" "Emily knows it by heart."—"Then," ſaid Mr. Cowper, "ſhe will repeat the "lines for me, I know, to give my "tongue a little reſt." Emily ſmiled at Arthur-William, and, calling him little rogue, repeated Milton's deſcription:

"The roof
"Of thickeſt covert was inwoven ſhade
"Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
"Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either ſide
"Acanthus and each od'rous buſhy ſhrub
"Fenc'd up the verdant walk; each beauteous
"flower,
"Iris all hues, roſes and jeſſamine,
"Rear'd high their flouriſh'd heads between,
"and wrought
"Moſaic; under foot the violet,
"Crocus and hyacinth, with rich inlay,
"Broider'd the ground."

"I thank

"I thank you, my dear Miſs Au-
"brey," ſaid Mr. Cowper, and then proceeded: "There was in more re-ſpects than one ſimilarity enough, at leaſt in our ideas, between the dwelling of our firſt parents and that which we had made, to induce us to think it a Paradiſe, and we were inclined to give it the name, but that the heavenly title belonged to the whole diſtrict around us. We thought, however, that, allowing Melford to be Paradiſe, we might call our cottage Eden-bower, a name which it retains to this day."—"Who lives there
"now?" ſaid Arthur-William, who was the only one of the party that felt no reluctance in interrupting Mr. Cowper. —"Let me ſee," ſaid Mr. Cowper; "who lives there now?—We will aſk Edmund to-morrow. In the mean time, ſuppoſe I tell you who was one of the moſt agreeable of its viſitors at the time I was talking of. Soon after our

little

little Fanny was born, Mr. Grey, the worthy vicar of Melford, returned with new health and vigour, and he and Mrs. Grey, for they had no family, resumed their residence at the vicarage. He had been punctually informed of all that passed in his parish. At first he thought proper to assume a reserve, indicative of displeasure, not only to us, but to Mr. Cowsel: but, after investigating the whole business, and informing himself of the life we led, he relaxed; and, having solemnly expressed his disapprobation of our clandestine proceeding, not only forgave us, but soon became attached to us.

" Mrs. Grey, pleased with the improvement of my Fanny, and equally with her unaltered modesty and diffidence, called her her daughter, received her with affection, and presented her to her friends as her equal; while, in pri-

vate, ſhe laviſhed the higheſt encomiums on her, which, ſupported by a judicious account of the pretenſions of her family, ſoon obtained her the notice of the vicar's friends. She mingled with genteel company as if ſhe had been bred in it from her infancy; and, before I left her to go abroad, the firſt ducheſs in the country would not have bluſhed to introduce her at court. But parade, and pomp, and faſhion, were the laſt things that would ever have ſwayed her heart: her heart was at home; it had taken root at Eden-bower, and there it delighted to expand. I was but too happy.

"At length I received the fatal letter that called me from my paradiſe; that was to awake me from my celeſtial trance. My father, in the moſt urgent terms, deſired to ſee me without delay. I communicated the ſad ſummons to Fanny, to Cowſel, and to the vicar.

The

The laſt adviſed me to obey it, and to find an opportunity of reconciling my father to my conduct; and he requeſted, at the ſame time, that I would carry from him a letter on the ſubject, which he hoped would have a good effect. Fanny wept, but aſſented to the neceſſity of my obedience. Cowſel begged, before I went, as I was now of full age,—I was three-and-twenty,—that I would have a regular ſettlement made of the property i his hands. As for me, grieved as I was to the heart, I was convinced that a ſhort ſeparation from Fanny was not to be avoided; and I ſoothed my miſery with the thoughts of returning ſoon to her, either with my father and ſiſter, or charged to carry her to them. I therefore reſolved to do as Cowſel deſired, and then to ſet off. The good vicar conſented to be one of the truſtees of the ſettlement; and, when I came to

collect the whole of my Fanny's fortune, I found it amount to an income which we could have been content upon all our lives, without any farther assistance from my father. Our expenditure, together with the improvement of Edenbower, had never exceeded two hundred a-year; and, three years having elapsed, we had, from the annual accumulation and my advance for books, a fund of eleven hundred pounds, besides our cottage and Fanny's tontine, which was fifteen pounds a-year; so that the whole of the income was seventy pounds, without rent to pay, and without reckoning the good Mrs. Ross's tontine, which was also fifteen pounds a-year, and which, since my marriage, had accumulated in her own hands. This view of a provision for my wife was a very pleasing reflexion, and helped to console me in the affliction I suffered from the thoughts of leaving

leaving her. The deed was ſoon prepared, and with inexpreſſible delight did I execute it. The truſt was declared to purchaſe land, to be ſettled; firſt, on Fanny for her life, then on myſelf for my life, then to go to my children, ſhare and ſhare alike, with the exception of the cottage, which the ſmiles of my little Fanny won entirely for herſelf.

" When I executed the deed, I took leave of the vicar and Cowſel, and determined to ſpend the next day alone with my family, as I had fixed to begin my journey the day after. What mingled ſenſations of pleaſure and pain filled the remaining hours! The criſis was doubly anxious, as I knew that Fanny expected ſoon to be mother of another darling. Solicitous to relieve the oppreſſion ſhe ſaw me ſuffering, ſhe made every effort to remove it. She obſerved, that I had it in my power to

make the ſeparation a ſhort one; that an explanation with my father was now deſirable; that I ſhould return and find little Fanny grown, playing with a brother or ſiſter; and that my abſence would open a new ſource of delight in the exertions of the imagination. In ſpite of theſe encouragements, I was heavy at heart: I was going to croſs the ſea; my father, though liberal, had never been open to me; and I recollected the matrimonial views he had ſeveral times ſuggeſted, not only in his converſation, but in his letters. It was in vain, however, to think thus: my trunks were prepared, the poſt-chaiſe came to the door, as it was ordered, early in the morning; but it was noon before I could be forced from the objects of my heart, and not till the vicar, calling at Edenbower to chear the family, ſhamed me away. 'Well, then, adieu!' cried I,

'adieu!

'adieu! To your care, Grey, I leave 'her. Fanny, adieu!'

"Never ſhall I forget the figure and countenance of my Fanny; the tears ſtreaming from her blue eyes, while, unable to command the word, ſhe waved her adieu with her handkerchief. Think —" Here Mr. Cowper pauſed.—"No; it is for me to think," continued he, "for me to writhe, for me to weep!" He roſe, and, breaking from the party, ran out of the room, followed by Aubrey.

CHAPTER XX.

The Danger of unguided Benevolence. An Effort of cautious Generosity.

When Mr. Cowper, overcome by the vivid images of his memory, flew from the Aubreys, the evening was considerably advanced. He had dwelt with more detail on the incidents of his story than he at first intended, by which he had increased the interest of it in the minds of the party: he had interspersed it with his observations; and had occasionally intermitted his narrative to hear the opinions of his friends, and to give his own; and the wing of Time had borne them so smoothly onward that his progress

progreſs was forgotten, and Arthur-William had unconſciouſly robbed Sleep a full hour of his uſual tribute. He, as well as his brother and ſiſters, could have ſat up all night to liſten to the account of charming Fanny Roſs; and they were not a little diſappointed when Aubrey returned to the room, and informed them that Mr. Cowper was gone home. "O—h!" a lengthened oh! proclaimed their regret; but, on their mother's obſerving the hour, and Aubrey's telling them that Mr. Cowper was to be with them the next evening, they were ſatisfied. "Well!" cried Arthur-William, yawning, "I'll go up to 'Sbid-"likins: I dare ſay I ſhall dream of "Fanny Roſs; ſhan't you, Arthur? If "I do, I wiſh it may be kiſſing little "Fanny on the ſopha."—"How do "know ſhe had a ſopha, my love?" ſaid Arthurina.—"I don't know," re-

plied he.—" But I do," ſaid Emily: " you remember mamma's playing with " you and kiſſing you on the ſopha."—" So I do. But, mamma, what was " the matter with Mr. Cowper? What " made him cry ſo, and run away? Do " you think we ſhall hear that Fanny " Roſs is dead?"—" I am afraid ſo," replied Mrs. Aubrey, " though Mr. Cow- " per has ſaid nothing that makes it " certain."—" I think, from his obſer- " vations," ſaid Arthur, " that his grief " rather ariſes from his reflexion on " ſome part of his own conduct."—" It may be ſo," ſaid Aubrey; " and, " from hints that have fallen from him, " I am inclined to think that her fate " has been worſe than death."—" How " do you mean, papa?" cried Arthu- rina.—" I mean, my love," replied Aubrey, " that her afflictions may have " produced a derangement of mind."—

" Poor

" Poor Mr. Cowper!" exclaimed Emily. The whole family joined in pitying him; and, after Arthur-William went to Mrs. Miller, another hour was ſpent in talking of Fanny Roſs and Melford, and of the arrangement of the parſonage of Mariton, where rooms were appropriated for the viſits of Mr. Cowper and the Smyths.

The next morning, juſt as the family had done breakfaſt, and were prolonging their chat, Cæſar delivered a letter to Aubrey, ſaying, the perſon who brought it was waiting below. Breaking the ſeal of the letter, Aubrey found its contents to be a few lines from Mr. Elton, which he read aloud:

" My dear friend,

" The bearer of this, Mr. M'Knucle, " will explain to you the reaſon of my " not breakfaſting with you this morn-

" ing, according to my engagement;
" and will deliver a meſſage, the ſub-
" ject of which, circumſtances and want
" of time prevent my writing. I am,
" with the greateſt eſteem,

" Yours ſincerely,

" JOHN ELTON.

" Thurſday Evening."

Mrs. Aubrey and the young people went up to Mrs. Miller, and Aubrey to Elton's meſſenger. He was a ſhort, thick-ſet, red-faced man, in a ſhabby blue coat, red waiſtcoat, and fuſtian breeches; his ſtockings were grey worſted, ribbed, and in his ſhoes were large pewter buckles. " You come from
" Mr. Elton," ſaid Aubrey.—" Indaid I
" do," replied M'Knucle, " and I was
" to have been here in time laſt night by
" dark, to have prevented him the diſ-
" grace of ſlaiping at my couſin Mr.

" James

" James M'Knucle's; but I knew he
" gave it me in time to be too late;
" ſo I promiſed him to come with all
" ſpeed, on condition he would make up
" his mind to my not coming back laſt
" night before this morning; ſo I went
" to bed, and the firſt thing I did as
" ſoon as I got up out of my warm bed
" was to come ſtrait from my lodging
" in Ruſſel-court, through Covent-Gar-
" den, to carry your honour to your
" friend."—" I really do not under-
" ſtand you," ſaid Aubrey.—" And
" that's ſurpriſing now," ſaid M'Knucle,
" for I never ſpoke plainer in all my
" life, in a genteel way; for I would not
" go to tell you plump daſh, in an open
" manner, that my uncle and me ar-
" reſted your friend yeſterday morning
" in his bed."—" Oh! I underſtand
" you now," ſaid Aubrey; " Mr. El-
" ton is in jail then."—" And indaid

" he is not," replied M'Knucle; " ſo " that whether I ſpake jonteelly, or can- " didly, it's all one with your underſtand- " ing. I tell you once more that Mr. " Eelton, your friend, is in Carey-ſtreet, " at my uncle's: every body knows " Mr. James M'Knucle's." —" A " ſpunging-houſe, perhaps?" ſaid Au- brey.—" Fait!" ſaid M'Knucle, grin- ning, " and that ſure enough is the " name given to my uncle's caſtle by " ſome people: but that's an Engliſh- " Iriſh bull; for, don't ſpungers go to " an open houſe? When did you ever " hear of ſpunging at a lock-up houſe?" —" Now then," ſaid Aubrey, " that " I do underſtand Mr. Elton is in " your uncle's cuſtody, pray what is his " meſſage to me?"—" Meſſage!" cried the bailiff's follower with ſurpriſe; " why that; and I was to ſhow you the " way."—" The way is eaſily found," ſaid

ſaid Aubrey, "and I will not rob you of "your time."—"As for the way," replied M'Knucle, "that's aiſily found "ſure enough, every body knows Mr. "James M'Knucle's; but, as to rob-"bing me of my time, I beg your ho-"nour's pardon there; you can't do "that, for I have ſold it to your friend, "fait, and for a very good price, and ſo "it is at your ſervice, without any rob-"bery at all."—"Very well," ſaid Aubrey, "but I will not detain you."—"Very well, your honour!" returned the catchpole; "and I'll tell your friend "that you'll be with him in a jiffy; and "ſo Paddy M'Knucle wiſhes your ho-"nour a good night." Saying which he nodded his head, and made his exit.

Aubrey was the leſs ſurpriſed at the ſcene between the bailiff and himſelf, as Mr. Cowper's account of Elton had in ſome meaſure prepared him for it: he had

had conſidered the check given to him as thrown into the fire, and he did not expect ever to ſee or hear of him more. But now his errors, by degrees, were loſt in the magnitude of his misfortune: the horror of a priſon was a puniſhment that exceeded the deſert of negligent diſſipation; and Aubrey, in whoſe boſom reſentment has been obſerved to poſſeſs leſs force than perhaps is both neceſſary and laudable, thought no more of the deceit he had practiſed on himſelf, or, rather, endeavoured to palliate it. Clear it was, that the breaking of his appointment was the effect of neceſſity; he had been arreſted, and therefore could not come: he might not have thought it prudent to ſend the balance of the check; and, if Elton ſhould even deſire to ſee him to requeſt to uſe the whole for his liberation, it would be but natural. At firſt, while talking with M'Knucle, he

he had intended not to go to him; but, on reflexion, he deemed it right to inquire about the check; and felt, beſides, that he was now morally bound to go, as he had ſuffered his meſſenger to return without putting a negative to the unauthoriſed anſwer he had framed, and from which Elton would undoubtedly expect to ſee him. He therefore reſolved to conſider it as an engagement, and to keep it; and, ſtaying only to relate the affair to Mrs. Aubrey, he went after Paddy M'Knucle in about half an hour.

In his way to Carey-ſtreet, he meditated on the ſituation and character of Elton; and laid a plan for his reformation. He perſuaded himſelf that it was an opportunity thrown in his way by Providence, to begin a reform of his own neglect of his profeſſional duties: he reſolved to proceed by teſtifying a diſpo-

diſpoſition to ſerve him; by gently reproving the fabrication of Winfield and his family; by devoting the amount of Senſitive's check to his liberation; and by endeavouring, in a friendly, warm manner, to impreſs upon his mind a ſenſe of the folly and ſinfulneſs of artifice, and the conſequence of it both here and hereafter. Glowing with the virtue of his intention; for virtue in deſign being virtue in fact, the conſcious mind receives its reward, even though the malign influence of the evil ſpirit ſhould interrupt its execution. Aubrey, glowing with the noble deſign of ſaving a ſoul, and revolving the arguments dictated by Reaſon and Piety, knocked at the door of the ſpunging-houſe.

It was opened to him by his new acquaintance, Paddy M'Knucle. "Well "friend," ſaid Aubrey, "you ſee I "have not been long after you."—

"And,

" And, upon my ſoul," replied M'Knucle, " that's no fault of mine; and I " wiſh from the bottom of my body " you had ſtaid at home." Aubrey, to avoid the troubleſome loquacity of the bailiff, made an effort to go in, ſaying, " I want Mr. Elton."—" And in- " daid!" ſaid the man, without moving from the door; " you muſt ſeek him " elſewhere then."—" What do you " mean?" cried Aubrey, ſurpriſed.— " Why I main," replied M'Knucle, " that he is not here."—" Not here! " then pray why did you give me the " trouble of coming?"—" I'll tell your " honour," anſwered he; " for I ſee " you are a jontleman, and will be above " caſting blame on Paddy M'Knucle, " who is as innocent of the trouble he " has given you as your honour's own " ſoul. But, before I up and tell you,

" you

" you muſt come in and ſit down a bit,
" for it will take a while to talk."

Aubrey was now too curious to learn the particulars of Elton's ſudden releaſe, not to ſacrifice ſome time and ſome feeling to obtain the account; and he went into the paſſage: the door was immediately double-locked by M'Knucle, who then conducted him to a back-room, deſiring him, at the ſame time, not to be uneaſy at being locked in, for that there was ſome good company in the parlours, who would give their ears to get out as eaſily as he ſhould. " And " now that I have got your honour's " private ear," ſaid he, " I could tell " you a few names, and let you a little " into ſome hiſtories that ſurpriſed " Paddy M'Knucle himſelf, till he got " uſed to 'em." — " Now, my good " fellow," ſaid Aubrey, " conſider that " I am in a hurry."—" And fait! ſo I

" will,"

" will," replied M'Knucle: " then " you muſt know, it's all a bull of Mr. " Eelton's own; for, if he had a 'told " me that the other jontleman would " have been here laſt night, I ſhould " never have thought of coming to you " this morning. Now I'll tell you the " whole matter, juſt as it happened. " My uncle Jemmy no ſooner got the " writ, which gave him a power over " the body of your worthy friend, than " he ſet me about tracing and watching " him with all my might; and fait! wid " all the jontleman's cunning, for he is " no young fox, I ſoon found out his " cover; and, when I had ſafely lodged " him, I takes my uncle to the ſpot, " and ſo we nabbed him. When he " looked at the writ, 'Oh! jontle- " men,' ſaid he, addreſſing his ſpaich " to me and my uncle, 'this is a paice " of malice: the money ſhall be paid:

" I

" I have only to write to a friend; will
" one of you carry the letter? I'll re-
" ward you like a gentleman.' With
" that my uncle conſented to ſtay with
" your friend till I brought back an
" anſwer: ſo he writes a long epiſtle,
" and ſends me away to the top of Pic-
" cadilly wid it; and there I left the letter
" ſure enough, and came back with
" this anſwer, that the jontleman was
" gone out till he came back to dinner,
" when he would ſend an anſwer for
" himſelf. So there was no help for it;
" and here he came, and here he dined
" like a jewel of a prince. ' But, ho!'
" ſays he, ' I muſt not have the diſ-
" grace to ſleep in confinement.' So, after
" dinner, he ſays to me, ' M'Knucle,' ſays
" he, ' I have another friend that would
" come and do the buſineſs, though I
" would radher have the todder; but it
" grows late, and I am reſolved not to
" ſleep

" ſleep here to-night.'—Says I, ' You
" muſt make haſte then; for, mind you,
" our doors and your ſuppers don't
" keep the ſame hours.' With that he
" writes a ſhort letter; that little bit of
" a thing I brought to you, you know,
" and gives it me, and ſays, ' M'Knu-
" cle! here's a guinea for you, and a
" letter; the guinea you may give to
" Lucy M'Gra, if you like;'—for he had
" made me drink ſweet Lucy's health
" in a bumper, ſo he came to know ſhe
" was chriſtened Lucy M'Gra:—' and
" as for the letter,' ſays he, ' you muſt
" manage cleverly for me—you muſt
" firſt go again to Piccadilly; if Mr.
" ——' oh, devil burn the pretty name
" if I can remember it, but it's all one:
" —' if that there jontleman is coming,
" then bring this little letter back; if
" he is not come home, then mind and
" carry this to Albemarle-ſtreet, number
" —'

" —'—hut, I forget your number—
" there tell my friend Daubry where I
" am, and bring him to me.'—' Oh!
" devil burn me,' fays I, ' but I'll do this
" affair to a *t*; but, by my foul! Mr.
" Eelton, it is too late for the excurfion;
" but, howfomdever, fet your heart at
" reft; Paddy M'Knucle will manage it
" fome way or other to your heart's con-
" tent.' So I left him, and went ftrait
" to my lodgings, after I had taken a fup
" at the little Bacchus riding upon the
" big barrel; for, fays I to myfelf, what
" fignifies your going all the way to Pic-
" cadilly to-night, becaze, if Mr. Eel-
" ton's friend comes in time, he is off
" already; and, if he does not come in
" time, why it's too late for me to fetch
" eidher of 'em in time before to-
" morrow morning. And wasn't this
" fair raifoning now? I'll be judgt by
" yourfelf. And was I a magician, or a
" witch

" witch of Endor, to detect that Mr.
" ——, the Piccadilly jontleman, was,
" true enough, on his way to Mr. James
" M'Knucle's; and that, before I turned
" in, or began to amuſe my imagination
" with the thought of draiming of my
" ſweet Lucy M'Gra, Mr. Eelton was
" capering about London town wher-
" ever he pleaſed? Was I, laying ſound
" aſlaip in Ruſſel-court, to draim of
" Mr. Eelton's good luck, and not of
" my own ſweet Lucy M'Gra?"—" I
" thank you, Mr. M'Knucle," ſaid Aubrey, who, though entertained with this new rhapſody, had no inclination to prolong his pleaſure: " I find that Mr. El-
" ton was releaſed laſt night by the in-
" terference of another gentleman, and
" I only wiſh now to know the name of
" his friend: Can you recollect it?"—
" Burn me! my dear," replied he, " but
" I have a very good memory for faces,

" though not for names; for my buſi-
" neſs, do you ſee, lies more in deſcrip-
" tions and kays than names of ſtrang-
" ers." Here he was called by a loud voice. " Oh! how you are lucky!" continued he to Aubrey; " that's Mr. " James M'Knucle himſelf; and to be " ſure he can't tell you the name with-
" out mentioning it, when he has got it " down written on a paper." Saying which he opened the door, and no ſooner put his head out than he popped it back again, and, with a wink and nod, whiſpered Aubrey that he " might now " ax the jontleman himſelf; for, fait! " here he was with his uncle."

They advanced; and Aubrey with pain, but not ſurpriſe, ſaw Senſitive. " Ha!" cried the latter, " who ſhould " have thought of ſeeing you here?"—" I am returning weſtward," ſaid Aubrey; " ſhall I wait for you?"—" If " you

" you will walk ſlowly to the end of " the ſtreet," replied Senſitive, " I " will overtake you; my buſineſs is " very ſhort, but requires privacy."— " Certainly," returned Aubrey; " but " perhaps you will not think it neceſ- " ſary to be very delicate on this occa- " ſion, when I tell you that I came " myſelf to ſee Elton." On this Senſitive made no ſcruple to tranſact the buſineſs in his preſence; and Aubrey, recollecting Mr. Cowper's converſation reſpecting him, ſaw with mingled ſorrow, affection, and pity, Senſitive redeem the obligation which he had entered into the evening before, to procure Elton's releaſe, by paying down caſh to the amount of two hundred pounds.

Aubrey's emotion was not unattended with admiration; for he was not one of thoſe who thought that imprudence totally changed the nature of generoſity; or

that the weakneſs of heart which induces a man to forget his own intereſt for the pleaſure of relieving others was contemptible. It originated at leaſt in the ſource of virtue; and, though the ſtream ſpent itſelf by taking a courſe over quickſands, the clearneſs, the purity of it was never loſt while a drop remained in its channel. His affection for Senſitive was increaſed by what he ſaw, and his anxiety to ſave him augmented in proportion; he therefore reſolved to take the freedom of a friend, and the privilege of an older man, in uſing this occurrence as the foundation of a mild warning. As they walked homewards he divulged Elton's ſituation and loſs of virtue, and made him acquainted with the fabrication of the diſtreſſes of Winfield's family, and the fate of his own check; and, with the warmth of a father, entreated him to be more careful in the

the diſpoſal of his means of doing good. Senſitive, impreſſed by his affectionate manner, far from being hurt at the liberty he had taken, thanked him cordially, and aſſured him that he would be more upon his guard.

They ſpent the reſt of the morning together; in the courſe of which they ſtrolled into the auction-room, and were gratified to find the exhibition of Aubrey's pictures ſtill crowded with company. In his way home, after parting with Senſitive, Aubrey met Mr. Goodground, for the firſt time ſince he had received his admonitory epiſtle, which was delivered with Senſitive's generous one. "I thought, ſir," ſaid Goodground, "that I ſhould have ſeen "you, or heard from you, on my let-"ter."—"It was not much calculated, "Mr. Goodground," replied Aubrey, "to encourage a hope of deriving the

" assistance I wanted, from any further " discussion of my situation."—" Oh! " pardon me, sir," said Goodground, " there is no man alive more ready to " assist his friends, when assistance can " be of real service. I am glad, sir, to " see so valuable a collection of pic- " tures at Mr. Flourish's rooms: I have " not a doubt they will produce a con- " siderable sum; and, if you assure me " that it will more than cover all your " debts, come and take a beef-steak " with me to-day, and you shall have " the two hundred pounds on your note " of hand. I love generosity, Mr. " Aubrey; but you will allow that it " should go hand in hand with pru- " dence."—" Certainly," replied Aubrey; " and, as I am engaged to-day, " you will save your beef-steak; nor am " I any longer in want of the two hun- " dred pounds."—" I am glad to hear

" it,

" it, my dear Mr. Aubrey, heartily glad
" to hear it. Good day—no man alive
" more anxious to ſerve his friends."—
" *Prudently*," added Aubrey.

After dinner, Aubrey related the occurrences of the morning to his family; and they were ſtill commenting upon them when they heard a rap at the door; which Arthur-William gueſſed to be Mr. Cowper's.

CHAPTER XXI.

Continuation of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory.

THE gueſs was a good one; it was Mr. Cowper's knock, and he was preſently announced. He was cordially welcomed by the family-party; and Arthur-William ran up and ſhook hands with him. He apologized for his precipitate retreat the preceding night, and promiſed to behave better as he proceeded in his narrative. After a little general chat, finding, from the countenances of the party, that they were anxious for the continuation of his hiſtory, he did not keep them long in ſuſpence.

"I hope," ſaid he, "that my reflexions ſince I ran from you, will enable

ble me to keep my promiſe of behaving better to-night: yet, alas! I have hitherto related to you nothing but venial errors and a flow of happineſs; whereas, the ſequel of my ſtory is made up of damning crimes, puniſhments condign, and miſery extreme: but hear me out. After a fatiguing journey of three days, I arrived at Falmouth, where I found the Liſbon packet heaving anchor. I haſtened on board, and, in an hour's time, ſhe was under way. By the pilot I ſent a few lines a-ſhore, to be put into the poſt for my Fanny, informing her of the haſte with which I embarked, and promiſing to write by the firſt opportunity after I landed in Portugal. The wind blowing from the north, ſoon wafted us acroſs the bay of Biſcay. Sailing down the coaſt of Portugal, we hailed a coaſting pilot off the Duero, a conſiderable diſtance at ſea; and another

gentleman and myſelf engaged her to carry us and our luggage to Oporto, where, after beating off and on ſome hours at the mouth of the river waiting the tide, we were ſafely landed.

" I need hardly deſcribe the town to you; you know that it gave name to the whole kingdom, that it is a biſhop's ſee, and next to Liſbon, the richeſt and moſt populous town in Portugal. It is built on the declivity of a ſteep mountain, and the ſtreets are of courſe very uneven; but it is in general handſome; well paved, and by far the cleaneſt city in the kingdom: the fine quay extends along the river from one end of the town to the other. The interſperſion of trees and vines give it a very agreeable appearance; and the grand inequality of the face of the country adding the ſublime to the beautiful, I was ſtruck with rapture when I firſt beheld the

ſcene.

ſcene. On landing I haſtened to my father's houſe, where I was received by him and my ſiſter with the warmeſt affection. The latter, lively and handſome, was little altered from what ſhe was when we parted: ſhe was rather taller, had ſomething of a foreign air, and ſpoke Portugueſe and French fluently. But, in my father, there was a viſible change: it was not, however, a decline of health; his perſon retained its ſtrength, but the lines of his face were grown deep, his brow lowered, and his ſpirits, as I learned from my ſiſter, had entirely failed him for ſome time paſt.

"The very day I arrived he took me apart to ſpeak to me on the ſubject which had made him ſo urgent with me to come to Oporto; but, before he entered upon it, he inquired what connexions I had formed, and whether I had yet engaged the affections of any

woman of fortune. Had he not looked ſo ſadly, and had I not been afraid of adding to the oppreſſion I ſaw him ſuffering, I would have taken this opportunity of divulging the ſecret of my marriage; but, when I looked in my father's face, I found my reſolution give way, and I determined to poſtpone my confeſſion till I conſulted with my ſiſter; I therefore evaded his queſtions as well as I could, and yielded to the guilt of equivocation in telling him that I had never yet met with a woman of fortune who had power to engage my affections. He ſaid he was ſorry for it; for that he had ſet his heart upon my connecting myſelf in a way to provide greatly for a family, which was not to be done with a middling fortune without connexions. 'However, my dear Charles,' ſaid he, 'you are young, and may ſucceed yet, 'only let me ſay the ſooner the better:

'but,

'but, for the preſent, we muſt turn our
'thoughts to your ſiſter. Harriet has
'her ſhare of beauty; I have for a good
'while paſt had in my eye ſeveral
'wealthy men for her, and two have
'even offered themſelves; one a native,
'and the other an Engliſhman, in the
'higheſt commercial line: but ſhe is
'nice—I am afraid too nice: it is, how-
'ever, abſolutely neceſſary that ſhe
'ſhould marry; for I do not feel as I
'did, Charles; and Heaven knows my
'life may laſt very little longer. Now,
'ſhe ſays ſhe will never marry a fo-
'reigner, and the merchant is not to her
'taſte. But I am the leſs afflicted on
'this account, as it appears to be in her
'power to make a good match, and ſhe
'does not ſeem averſe to it: no doubt,
'thoſe marriages are the moſt fortunate
'where intereſt and inclination concur.
'About three months ago, a young

'man, named Smyth, arrived here, at-
'tended by French ſervants. He came
'from France, through Spain, to Liſ-
'bon, thence to this place; and it ſeems
'to have been his intention merely to
'look at Oporto, and continue his tra-
'vels; but, accidentally meeting Har-
'riet at the conſul's, he changed his
'plan, and has remained here ever
'ſince. When he came he brought
'only a letter from Liſbon for the con-
'ſul; but, ſince his ſtay, he has received
'many of introduction, from various
'quarters, to the principal people here,
'and one of credit to a great extent
'from London to a principal merchant.
'In ſhort, I have no doubt of his being
'a man of fortune; but I have a doubt
'of another kind, which it behoves us
'to ſolve without delay: I ſuſpect his
'views to be diſhonourable. His ha-
'bit is ſanguine, his expreſſion ardent,

'and

'and his knowledge of the world 'conſiderable; yet, while he attends to 'Harriet with the aſſiduity of a lover, 'not a word have I heard on the ſubject 'of wedlock. The continuation of his 'attentions will be an injury to your ſiſ-'ter, if the end of them be not aſcer-'tained; and, if marriage be his view, 'it cannot, in my opinion, take place 'too ſoon. I have therefore ſent for 'you to aſſiſt me in managing this af-'fair; for I confeſs to you I do not wiſh 'it broke off.'

"On hearing my father's reaſons for calling me to Oporto, I could not blame him; and, to be the guardian of my ſiſter's honour and happineſs, was a thought ſo pleaſing to me, that it made ſome amends for the painful one of the diſtance I was from the darlings of my heart. I told my father that I was ſure my ſiſter would open her mind to me, and

and that I had little doubt of ſoon diſcovering Smyth's. Harriet was as candid as I expected. In the firſt converſation I had with her alone, which was in about an hour after that I had had with my father, ſhe frankly told me all that had paſſed between her and her admirer. Smyth had profeſſed the moſt ardent paſſion for her, and had uſed every means in his power to excite a return: he had even talked of marriage to her, but in a way that did not warrant her mentioning it to my father. He had wild notions reſpecting it, and had told her that ſhe was the only woman he had ever ſeen who could make him think of it for a moment; but he had never directly made the offer. 'And how, 'Harriet,' ſaid I, 'did you anſwer him 'when he talked in this way?'—'By 'careleſsly thanking him for his com-'pliment,' ſaid ſhe, 'and profeſſing a

'pre-

'preference for a ſingle life.'—'But 'pray, Harriet,' ſaid I, 'how does your 'heart ſtand affected?'—'Pleaſed with 'his paſſion,' replied ſhe; 'and would 'not break at his deſertion.'—'And 'have you given him any ground to be-'lieve that he is agreeable to you?'—'Is not permitting his admiration,' replied ſhe, 'giving ſome ground?'—'But did he ever take any liberty with 'you?'—'At the houſe of Donna Se-'raphina de Monocella, a beautiful 'Portugueſe, to whom you will be in-'troduced, he has more than once 'compelled me to check him with a 'violence which I meant at the time 'ſhould produce a laſting breach; but 'his intreaties, and Donna Seraphina's 'perſuaſions, have prevented it.' I told Harriet that ſhe had been imprudent in giving him a ſecond opportunity; but that, as I found he was agreeable to her,

I would

I would at a proper time ſpeak to Smyth; and that I did not doubt, if ſhe would be conducted by me, to ſee them ſoon married; to which ſhe anſwered with proper pride that ſhe was in no hurry to be married, and that ſhe ſhould never break her heart for any man.

" Smyth, having been made to expect me, thought it proper to pay me a viſit as ſoon as he heard of my arrival. I found him a handſome fellow, ſix feet high, well proportioned, and of a graceful mien. His eye was vivacious, quickly changing its object, except when fixed by the magic of beauty; but I could not help thinking, from the firſt moment I ſaw him, that his countenance beſpoke a deſigning heart. We entered into familiar chat, and he undertook to be my *cicerone* through Oporto. As we walked, he leaned on my arm with a

friendly eaſe; and I ſoon found, from his converſation, that he was a libertine, and that he expected to find me one. He ſpoke ſlightingly of the Portugueſe women in general, but dwelt with rapture on the charms of Donna Seraphina de Monocella, whom he deſcribed as poſſeſſing the elegant mould of the Engliſh, together with the *piquante tournure* of the Portugueſe. 'In ſhort,' ſaid he, 'ſhe is the moſt bewitching 'beauty I know, one excepted. She 'ſpeaks Engliſh and French as well as 'ſhe does Portugueſe: but then ſhe is 'ſuch a prude. That's her houſe— 'ſhall I preſent you to her now?'

"Before I had time to utter a negative, he rang the door-bell, ſaying; 'if 'Seraphina receives us in her diſhabille, 'you are a loſt man; for it is in her 'undreſs ſhe is moſt irreſiſtible.' The door was opened by an Engliſh footman, whom

whom he aſked if Don Alvarez de Monocella was at home? and being informed that he was not, deſired to know if Donna Seraphina was viſible; on which we were ſhown into an elegant ſaloon till he could let us know.

"We were ſoon ſummoned to Donna Seraphina's boudoir, where almoſt every thing that could give the leaſt aſſiſtance in ſeducing the ſenſes ſeemed to be collected. The room, which was lofty and well-proportioned, though not large, was hung with roſe-coloured ſilk, divided into feigned pannels by broad fine lace, reaching to about three feet from the floor. The lower compartments of the walls were filled with beautiful mythological figures; Cupids, Venus and the Graces, groups of nymphs, and various others. Curtains of a pale ſtraw-coloured perſian, fringed with ſilver, hung in rich feſtoons round the windows. The furni-

furniture of the chairs and ſophas was of the ſame colour, but made of damaſk. The tables were of beautiful ſatin-wood, that reflected the objects over them. The middle diviſions of two of the pannels on each ſide of the room, conveniently ſituated at the elbows of the ſophas, were filled with books, elegantly bound: between theſe were broad mirrors, in ſuperb frames, fixed over the ſophas. The ceiling of the room was a clear azure, that rivalled the ſky; and on the floor was ſtretched a fine green baize, to emulate the verdure of ſpring. On the magnificent marble chimney-piece, ſupported by Caryatides, ſtood an elegant clock, and flower-vaſes, containing roſes and myrtles in bloom, which caſt an agreeable odour through the air. A piano-forte, a fine harp, and ſtands for muſic and for drawings, completed the furniture of this elegant boudoir.

boudoir. On one of the ſophas lay a Spaniſh guitar, with ſome ſongs and coloured drawings, careleſsly intermixed. On entering, I was ſtruck with the beauty of this finiſhed piece of artificial taſte: but, though I was delighted, I could not help comparing with it the ſimplicity and nature of Eden-bower; and I preferred—yes, my mind was ſtill pure enough to prefer the latter.

"Donna Seraphina allowed me ſome minutes to contemplate her beautiful apartment before ſhe made her appearance; and I had juſt taken up a Portugueſe ſong from the ſopha, when my attention was called to the other ſide of the room by the opening of a door in the corner-pannel, which I had not perceived. Donna Seraphina advanced, and the ſimplicity of her dreſs formed a contraſt to the artful combination of her apartment. She had on a ſimple, white linen

linen garment, which was gathered about her waiſt by a roſary; and her head was bound with a light blue muſlin handkerchief, tied behind. Simple as was her dreſs, however, it was a reſult of the niceſt art; and the mode of it, which was in the Grecian-ſtile, was perfectly adapted to diſplay her ſhape and the ſymmetry of her limbs. Her face was exquiſitely handſome: her eyes were either vivacious or tender, at her command; her ſmile graceful beyond expreſſion. But I will not be more particular in my deſcription; ſuffice it to ſay, ſhe was a moſt beautiful woman, about five-and-twenty years old. She came forward with a ſmile; and, on Smyth's preſenting me, welcomed me to Oporto in a moſt flattering manner, and altogether gave me a reception that made a deep impreſſion on me. She ſpoke to me in Engliſh; and the ſlight deviation of accent,

cent, by which I could juſt diſtinguiſh the foreigner, rendered the language but the more agreeable to my ear. She had a gaiety and eaſe in her manners, at that time of day not much known in our country, and which to an Engliſhman, ſo little acquainted as I was with foreign ſociety, were faſcinating in ſuch a woman as Donna Seraphina de Monocella. She ſtarted ſubjects, talked fluently on them, took up her guitar without being aſked, and gave me a ſpecimen of the Portugueſe ſong, with one of the moſt melodious voices I ever heard. But what flattered me moſt, and moſt captivated me, was the riveting of her eyes upon me, inſinuating into my unpractiſed heart that ſhe was more than commonly prepoſſeſſed in my favour. Dare I own it to you? Such an attack on one ignorant of the arts of coquetry was irreſiſtible: I had not been a week at Oporto

—I bluſh

—I bluſh even at this diſtance of time for my depravity—I had not been three days at Oporto, before my magnet of Eden-bower loſt its power of attraction: Fanny—how ſhall I ſpeak it!—ſeldom engaged my thoughts; and, in the courſe of a fortnight, I was ſo completely faſcinated that, without a ſingle ſtruggle, I devoted myſelf to the paſſion inſpired by Donna Seraphina."

"Oh, Mr. Cowper, Mr. Cowper!" cried Arthur, ſhuddering.—"My dear "young friend," ſaid Mr. Cowper, "I "am more pleaſed than mortified at "your emotion. I have that to relate "which will enſure me your forgive- "neſs; but your ſhuddering at a crime "is a pledge to your parents, to your "friends, to yourſelf, of the rectitude "of your own mind, and of the ſtabi- "lity of your virtues: yet my example "is not a uſeleſs leſſon; there are Sera-

"phinas

" phinas in England; you will now " eaſily detect them, and not only be " upon your guard yourſelf, but may " ſerve a friend by deſcribing the Se- " raphina of Cowper." While Mr. Cowper was ſpeaking to Arthur, Arthur-William went round to his mother, and, keeping his eyes fixed on him, ſaid, in a whiſper, loud enough to be heard by all the party: " Mamma, I hate Mr. " Cowper!"—" You are right, my " little fellow," ſaid Cowper; " I ſhould " be ſorry if you did not hate me at " this moment; but you too ſhall for- " give me by and by."

" Donna Seraphina," continued he, reſuming his narrative, " introduced me to her huſband, Don Alvarez, who was conſiderably older than herſelf, and who, with all the politeneſs of a faſhionable huſband, was as devoid of jealouſy. He had gradually become inſenſible to Sera-

phina's

phina's charms; and was at this time under the influence of another attachment, that diſpoſed him to pay leſs attention to her conduct. Being on the moſt intimate terms with my father and ſiſter, as well as with Smyth, they both requeſted me to conſider myſelf always at home in their houſe; and I promiſed to make frequent uſe of the *entrée* beſtowed upon me; a promiſe I but too faithfully kept; for, after the firſt fortnight, I was more there than at my father's. Smyth, villain that he was, had not only foreſeen, but planned my infatuation, and he was inſtigated by the moſt abominable motives. By plunging me into a vicious amour with a married woman, he flattered himſelf ſo to corrupt my ſoul that I ſhould ſet female virtue at nought, and even be brought to conduce to his diſhonourable deſigns upon my ſiſter. I ſoon, how-

ever, convinced him of his miſtake. Donna Seraphina did not appear in my eyes the character he intended I ſhould ſee. So pure was my heart, that had I ſuppoſed her devoid of virtue, I ſhould have been in no danger: I was the more alive to her charms, and to the enjoyment of the intereſt I had excited in her heart, by connecting with them the ſuperiority of her mental faculties and the delicacy of her ſenſibility. My crime at firſt conſiſted in forgetting, or rather not thinking of the ſacred ſituation in which Donna Seraphina ſtood, and in overlooking my own. When Smyth, therefore, diſplayed his libertine notions, he but the ſooner rouſed me to the care of Harriet's innocence and peace of mind, and I reſolved to bring his courtſhip to an immediate concluſion one way or the other.

"I frankly

"I frankly told my ſiſter that I thought Smyth would not make a good huſband, and I adviſed her to overcome the preference ſhe ſeemed to have for him; but, at all events, to put an end to the uncertainty of his views. In a conſultation with my father the very day after I arrived, and before I had reſigned myſelf to the idolatry of Donna Seraphina, it was agreed that I ſhould report I had brought an invitation for my ſiſter from a friend, to return with me to England on a viſit; and, if it produced no deciſive declaration from Smyth, I was in fact to carry her away. The ſcheme was ſucceſsful. Smyth ſaw that he had no hope but in marriage, and, being too deeply enamoured of Harriet to let that prevent his obtaining her, declared himſelf. When I ſpoke on the ſubject to him, he made ſome aukward excuſes, with a countenance of cha-

grin for not being more explicit; and having obtained my ſiſter's conſent to their union, he preſſed the immediate celebration of their marriage with ſuch earneſtneſs and diſintereſted ardour, that my father concurred, and, in the third week after my arrival at Oporto, they were married by the chaplain of the factory with due ſolemnity, and every requiſite authority.

" That he was a man of fortune, I told you had been previouſly aſcertained by my father, who, I afterwards found, privately ſtipulated with Smyth, that the receipt of Harriet's portion ſhould be delayed till after his death: to which Smyth had agreed, as it obviated the neceſſity of a ſettlement. Love, and the agreeable life they led, united to induce the married couple to remain ſome time at Oporto. They appeared to be very happy; and Smyth's friend-

ſhip for me ſeemed to increaſe with his happineſs. Meanwhile, my infatuation augmented, and I lived but by the looks and ſmiles of Donna Seraphina. A letter from Fanny, while it made me eaſy in reſpect to the health of my family, gave a ſting to my heart, which, however, was ſoon extracted by the magic of Seraphina's eyes. Pleaſed to hear of all being well at Eden-bower, I locked up Fanny's letter, to avoid the pain I felt in reading her artleſs effuſions of love. When I was diverted from confeſſing my marriage to my father, I fully intended to diſcloſe it to my ſiſter; but relinquiſhed the deſign from the conſciouſneſs of the ſituation of my mind. I therefore continued to keep the ſecret in my own boſom, till ſucceeding events determined me to confide in Smyth."

CHAPTER XXII.

Continuation of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory.

"MONTH after month glided away in ſweet delirium: Seraphina, her books, her muſic, her voice, ſpread enchantment around me. For ſome time our attachment ſeemed to continue pure; but at length it aſſumed a character that involved me in horrors. Both Don Alvarez and Donna Seraphina were extremely expenſive in their manner of living, and their finances began to be unequal to their profuſion. I frequently ſupplied her with conſiderable loans; for my father continued my allowance: and for theſe loans I received preſſures of the hand, which were ſucceeded, on ſubſequent

quent loans, by preſſures of the lips. Oh! how dangerous to man is an unprincipled woman, who, with beauty, has art enough to veil her depravity! The nature of my paſſion became changed; ſhe knew it, and was not offended; ſhe knew it, and ſeemed to pity me; ſhe knew it, and redoubled all the arts of intoxication; and, though ſhe continued to talk of virtue, ſcrupled not to bewail its reſtraints.

"By ſupplying Donna Seraphina with money, I was at a loſs to remit the uſual allowance to Fanny. Anxious not to apply to my father, who was as uncommunicative as ever on the ſubject of his affairs, in my perplexity I unboſomed myſelf to Smyth, who lent me the ſums I wanted, taking my notes as memorandums. I had ſtill virtue enough to think periodically of ſupplying the means of comfort to Fanny and her children, and

to frame plauſible excuſes for my abſence and the delay of acquainting my father with our marriage: but, as to compunction, the horror of my guilt was concealed from myſelf by the thought of Fanny's ignorance of it, and by the violence of my paſſion for Seraphina. Smyth ſometimes talked of going to England; againſt which I laboured to diſſuade him myſelf, and procured my ſiſter's aid, till at length ſhe was afraid to go to ſea till Edmund was born."—"What!" cried Arthur-William, "Edmund, that we ſaw the other "morning?"—"Yes, my dear boy," replied Mr. Cowper; "Edmund was born at Oporto, but he is not the leſs an Engliſhman: children born abroad are conſidered to belong to the country of their parents. About the time of his birth, I began to obſerve that Fanny had not written to me for a good while; but

but it did not much engage my mind, as I knew she had every comfort about her, and as I was persuaded that nothing passing at Oporto could reach her but through me. From this period, Donna Seraphina kept me suspended between the allurements of a guilty passion and the scruples of her virtue, in such a state of agitation, that I would have sacrificed my soul to her in any way.

" One evening, when my nephew was about two months old, I was sitting with my sister, who had him on her knee, while the nurse that suckled him stood by; she was an Englishwoman, whose husband was servant of one of the merchants of the factory. Harriet was very thoughtful, and I observed some tears drop from her eyes upon the child. Accounting for it from the natural tenderness of a mother contemplating her infant, I took no notice of it at the time;

and a note being brought to me from Donna Seraphina, desiring my company, I rose to go. Harriet then looked at me, and said, 'I wish you could have 'staid with me to-night: I have some-'thing to say to you; but it will do to-'morrow.'—'If so, my dear Harriet,' said I, 'it *shall* be to-morrow; for I am 'particularly engaged just now.' She smiled significantly, and I left her.

"I flew to Donna Seraphina, whom I found alone in her boudoir. She received me with a tender, but melancholy look. 'My dear Carlos,' said she, 'I 'expect Don Alvarez and your friend 'Smyth in a few minutes; they are 'only gone for my cousin Violante, and 'therefore I must make haste with 'what I have to say. I am much in 'your debt, my Carlos, but I am not 'uneasy about that; for next month 'Don Alvarez receives his revenues

"from

'from his ſeigneurio of Pueblo, and I 'ſhall be able to return the whole I 'have borrowed from you; beſides, I 'ſhould be unworthy of our tender 'friendſhip, could I, through pride, 'regret the teſtimonies of it. On the 'contrary, my dear Carlos, I rely upon 'it once more to ſave me from an em-'barraſſment of the moſt dreadful na-'ture.'—'Too lovely Seraphina,' cried I, 'diſpoſe of my purſe, of my life; but 'have pity on my poor heart, and be 'not for ever adverſe to my happineſs.' —'For ſhame! Carlos,' ſaid ſhe; 'min-'gle not the raptures of love with the 'miſerable concerns of money: as theſe 'indeed are proofs of your paſſion, I 'often think of them, nor is ſuch a 'paſſion as yours always to be reſiſted; 'but, while the immediate object is 'gold, let us talk like merchants. All 'that you have advanced, or ſhall ad-

'vance for me, ſhall be repaid from the 'Pueblo revenues; but, in the begin-'ning of the next week, I muſt either 'pay for my diamond necklace and 'ceſtus or give them up, as it is not in 'Don Alvarez's power to let me have 'the money. I would not part with 'them for worlds!'—'I tremble, Se-'raphina,' ſaid I, 'leſt I ſhould not 'have it immediately in my power to 'gratify your wiſh; but tell me the ſum 'wanted.'—'Only ſix hundred moi-'dores,' ſaid ſhe.—I turned pale. I had already exhauſted my allowance, and had borrowed ſome hundreds from Smyth. 'Would to Heaven! Sera-'phina,' cried I, 'that I had the com-'mand of my father's ſtrong cheſt! not 'an hour ſhould elapſe till I had brought 'you the ſum. Alas! I muſt pain-'fully confeſs to you that my own re-'ſources are at preſent very inadequate

'to

'to such a payment.'—'Well, my dear 'Carlos,' said she, with a sigh, 'it can't 'be helped; but it will cost me many 'a pang; for I know they will be im-'mediately bought by that envious 'creature Donna Theresa de Lima; and 'you know they have been seen upon 'me more than once. Can't you bor-'row a bag or two from your father? 'Is his chest full? Do you ever go to 'it?'—'My father,' replied I, 'is very 'reserved even to me respecting his 'finances; but, though he never sends 'me to his chest, I often see him open 'it, nor does he scruple going to it be-'fore his acquaintance, and it appears 'well filled with bags of moidores.'—'O santa Maria!' exclaimed she, laughing; 'it would be delightful to 'borrow a couple of his bags without 'saying any thing to him about it! Now, 'do, Carlos, if you love me, do. Be

'assured

'assured you shall have them to replace 'in the course of next month from the 'revenues of Pueblo: he will never 'miss them.'—'You jest, Seraphina,' said I, 'he could not but miss them 'from the vacancy they must leave: 'besides, I never touch his key, and 'do not even know where he keeps it.' —'How unfortunate am I!' cried she.— 'Perhaps,' said I, 'I may have the 'good fortune to procure the sum by 'other means; I will at least endea-'vour. You are to be at my father's 'to-morrow, and I will let you know.' She smiled, and pressed the back of her hand to my lips. Our tête-à-tête was here interrupted by the entrance of Donna Violante, with Don Alvarez, Smyth, and the Italian music-master, whom Donna Violante had pressed into her service. She had herself a good voice, though not equal to her cousin's; and

and ſongs, duets, and trios, ſpeeded the flight of Time.

"We ſupped, and it was late before we parted; but I was ſo anxious to gratify the wiſhes of Donna Seraphina, that I could not go to bed till I aſked Smyth to add this advance to my former debt. He anſwered me in the moſt friendly manner, that it was at preſent out of his power; for, ſtaying at Oporto longer than he intended, he had been obliged to write to his agents, to depoſit three thouſand pounds more in the hands of his banker, and ſend a new letter of credit from him, which he expected by the return of the packet; and, if it would do then, it ſhould be at my ſervice. He ſpoke ſo kindly, and with ſuch apparent candour, that it never entered my head to doubt the truth of what he ſaid; and, conceiving I had inſpired him with a friendſhip for me, I opened my mind to him

him without reſerve, dwelling with raptures on the charms of Seraphina, and mentioning the lively manner with which ſhe inſtigated me to borrow a couple of bags from my father's ſtrong cheſt. 'Admirable!' cried Smyth, laughing; 'admirable! and why not? I ſee no 'harm in it; nor ſhall your mind 'have to feel any remorſe; for, ſhould 'Donna Seraphina fail to reimburſe the 'ſtrong-box, you ſhall have the amount 'of the bags from me on the receipt of 'my letter.'—'Nay but, my dear 'friend,' ſaid I, 'to deceive my father!' —'Why,' returned he, 'he is not very 'open with you in theſe affairs; and I 'declare I ſee no crime in overhauling 'the duſt, if you take care to do it without being diſcovered.' Alas! I was now ſo far trained in wickedneſs as not to have my ear hurt by the axiom of Vice, that diſcovery was the eſſential part

part of a crime and the moſt to be guarded againſt. After a little reflexion, however, I told him that I did not think he was ſerious; and we ſoon after parted for the night.

"The thoughts of Seraphina's diſappointment kept me awake all night; and I roſe next morning unrefreſhed and miſerable. My father expected company, and with them Don Alvarez and Seraphina. She was in ſpirits, and playful. Among other indifferent topics, ſhe introduced a whimſical diſſertation on keys, comparing their various uſes, from the little one that opened the trinket of a heart on her finger, to the ſubſtantial one that opened my father's ſtrong-box; and at laſt ſhe perſuaded him to compare hers and his together. She had communicated ſome degree of her ſpirits to him, and he went and brought the key. After a little rattle, apparently without meaning, ſhe

ſhe ſuddenly put the key in her pocket, and held it there in her hand. 'O! 'ſignor Cowper,' ſaid ſhe, 'I am much 'obliged to you: I ſhall take care of 'this key, and return it to you when I 'have made the proper uſe of it.' Having trifled a while, and raiſed a laugh at my father, in which he joined heartily, ſhe took out her handkerchief and the key together, and wiping it affectedly, ſaid, with a ſmile, 'Come, come, ſignor, 'don't be alarmed; there it is, even 'brighter than when I pocketed it.' She then returned it with infinite grace, ſinging a verſe of a ſong about a lock and key, as my father went out of the room to put it up. While he was out, ſhe called Smyth to her, and gave him a flat round box, which ſhe took out of her pocket, ſaying: 'I found 'your box this morning, and there it 'is.' He thanked her, put it up, and

ſhortly

ſhortly after left the room. The day paſſed with our wonted gaiety; except that I obſerved a ſlight gloom on the countenance of my ſiſter, with whom I had not found an opportunity of explanation, which indeed ſhe now ſeemed to avoid. When I handed Donna Seraphina to her ſedan, ſhe ſaid to me in a whiſper: 'Let me ſee you 'to-morrow evening about nine: I am 'engaged the whole day, but, at that 'hour I will return home alone.' She then preſſed my hand, and accompanied the preſſure with one of thoſe ſeductive looks which had already ruined the candour of my mind, and prepared it for the eaſy admiſſion of every vice. My dear children," continued Mr. Cowper, addreſſing his young friends, "be aſſured that candour is one of the beſt centinels of rectitude and peace of mind: the moment we begin to conceal our actions

actions from those who have a right to know them, we have removed our principal guard, and left the avenues open to the enemy.

" I was too much the slave of Seraphina to neglect the appointment; and, such was my punctuality, that I rang at the bell as she returned. She received me with increased tenderness; and I followed her to her boudoir, where I saw a sealed packet on her table. 'Carlos,' said she, 'I am going to put your love 'to the test; and, if it prove as great as 'I think it is, there is no test to which 'you may not put mine.' 'Name it, 'Seraphina,' cried I; 'for such a re-'ward what would I not do! Find me 'some instrument that will demolish the 'sides of my father's chest; or teach 'me some chemical process that will 'dissolve the iron case; I'll do it, and 'brave the consequences!' — 'Silly

'Carlos,'

'Carlos,' ſaid ſhe, ſmiling, 'to think 'of force: I ſhould not deſerve your 'love could I expoſe you to ſuch cer- 'tainty of a breach with your father: 'No, no, there is no need of hammers 'or chemiſtry; wit is the beſt inſtru- 'ment, and money the beſt chemiſtry; 'a ſmall mixture of them has rendered a 'viſit to your father's cheſt very eaſy 'and ſafe.' As ſhe ſpoke ſhe opened the packet, from which ſhe took the box I had ſeen her the evening before give to Smyth, and laid it down. There re- mained ſomething folded up, which ſhe held ſtill covered, ſaying, 'This is the 'taliſman, which will ſuffice, by the 'gentleſt application, to make the lid 'of the box fly open. By means of my 'chemical art, I procured it from a Cy- 'clops: take it; it poſſeſſes the quality 'of trying love.' I took this taliſman, which, on unfolding the paper, I found

to

to be a key, the wards of which were exactly the same as those of my father's. I started: imaginary flights of passion gave way before the reality of a deed at which I could not but shudder. Compunction, however, was but momentary; a look from Seraphina effaced it from my heart. 'But, dear Seraphina,' cried I, 'though this enables me to remove 'a bag, it does not secure me from a 'discovery; my father will certainly 'miss the number I take out.'—'What 'a novice,' said she, 'is this Carlos of 'mine! it will be your fault if he does. 'Here are a bag of counters; you have 'only to exchange them for the coin: 'the same bags being filled and placed 'lowest, will remove every chance of 'their being missed for many months; 'and the coin will be replaced in less 'than two, from the revenues of Pue-'blo.' I was bewildered, and gave up my

reason

reaſon to this enchantreſs. I even wondered at my fears, when there was ſo little hazard of diſcovery, and when I was ſo certain of returning the money ſoon, either through the means of Donna Seraphina, or of my friend Smyth. I could not help expreſſing my ſurpriſe at her having a falſe key; at which ſhe laughed, and ſaid, it was odd I ſhould be ſurpriſed, when ſhe had procured it before my own eyes; and ſhe unravelled the whole myſtery, by opening the box that accompanied the key, where I ſaw the wards of my father's key impreſſed on wax. She had obtained the key by her humour, had made the impreſſion in her pocket on wax ſhe had prepared for the purpoſe, and had given it immediately to Smyth, whom, ſhe confeſſed to me, ſhe had forced into a league with her, on his lamenting his inability to let me have the money ſoon enough. Smyth loſt

no

no time in carrying it to a lockſmith, who, ſuppoſing himſelf only the inſtrument of an intrigue, to which he was not unaccuſtomed, received his Johannes, and produced the key, without a grain of pity for the huſband who had not the art of ſecuring a wife againſt all keys, by placing the lock on her heart.

"While I remained with Donna Seraphina, my reſolution to perpetrate the deed never wavered, and I thought only of the reward of my crime. I urged her with the utmoſt ardour to put a period to ſuſpence; to which ſhe replied, with one of thoſe irreſiſtible looks of which ſhe was perfectly miſtreſs, that Don Alvarez was going the next day to ſpend a week at his *Quinta* *, and that ſhe was not to accompany him. The images that attended this declaration completed the intoxication of my ſenſes, and I was

* A country-houſe.

wound

wound up to a pitch of frenzy which might have impelled me to more horrid crimes than robbery in the purſuit of my recompence. Donna Seraphina ſaw the intemperate effects of my inebriation, and, fearing the return of Don Alvarez before I could maſter my emotions, ſhe urged me to be gone, and at length forced me away. I reached my father's door without once abſtracting my thoughts from the charms of Donna Seraphina. I rung, and the information of my father being at home awakened a new train of ideas. I could not bear to ſee him; and, telling the ſervant that I was going to Mr. Smyth's, I turned from the houſe without going in.

"As I walked, a conflict aroſe in my mind between duty and paſſion, in which the latter had the better throughout, and was ultimately victorious; ſoothing my conſcience by determining firſt to be re-

assured by Smyth that he would enable me to replace the two bags of moidores. For some days he had been in treaty for a new carriage, to make excursions in the country, and he had been trying one that very day. We happened to stop at his door precisely at the same moment; and, instead of ringing, I got into the carriage and sat by him. He laughed at my scruples, and again assured me of the money. I think I see the villain now, squeezing my hand, talking of his connexion, expressing his friendship. After some farther talk, in which he strove to remove my scruples, he invited me to dine with him next day, and we parted.

"I returned home, encouraging myself with the certainty of replacing the money; and I had so far argued myself into a contempt of what Smyth termed my weakness, that I could bear to see my

my father. I thought he received me with unuſual kindneſs. He was writing when I entered the room; but, on ſeeing me, he put his paper into his port-folio. After ſome common chat, he ſaid: 'I 'think, Charles, that you have been 'long enough in Portugal. I am not 'ſorry that the climate and the ſociety 'of Oporto have had charms enough to 'make a year of your life paſs ſo agree-'ably; but, my ſon, it is all pleaſure 'and no progreſs. Here it is impoſſible 'you can connect yourſelf: I wiſh you 'had brought a wife with you.' He looked mildly, yet fixedly at me, as he ſaid this: but, though my conſcience inclined me to detect in his look an alluſion to Fanny, I could not. 'But, as you 'did not,' continued he, 'don't you 'think it is time to go back for one? 'You know that I have always placed 'great hope on your marrying pro-

'perly.'—'My dear ſir,' ſaid I, 'it is 'a circumſtance that muſt be left to 'time and fate: I have no thoughts of 'a wife at preſent.'—'I believe you, 'Charles,' replied he, with a look that now to my mind became equivocal; 'but I am ſorry while I believe it, for 'you *ſhould* think of one.'—'*Should!* 'ſir,' ſaid I, in great agitation, 'why '*ſhould?*'—'My dear boy,' replied he, calmly, 'wherefore this emotion? per-'haps, on reflexion, you may think it 'your *duty*—when I have ſo repeatedly 'expreſſed my wiſhes to you on the 'ſubject.' He pauſed at the word *duty*, and I ſhould certainly have betrayed myſelf, had he not added his concluſion. 'I will not diſtreſs you on this point,' continued he; 'take your own time. 'I feel, Charles, that I have uſed you 'ill, in not being more open to you on 'the ſubject of my fortune. It is, per-

'haps, too late to repair my error; but 'it is my intention to converſe with you 'ſoon fully on the ſituation of my af-'fairs: in the mean time, forgive me, 'I beſeech you, for my former reſerve, 'and for the erroneous ſyſtem I have 'purſued.' As he ſpoke this he put out his hand, which I preſſed with warmth to my lips, intreating him not to torture me by reproaching himſelf; for I was ſenſible he had been all goodneſs to me. He preſſed my hand, and withdrew his. 'Tell me, Charles,' ſaid he, 'have 'you never thought it extraordinary 'that I ſhould keep ſo many bags of 'money locked up at home in my cheſt, 'when it might be otherwiſe diſpoſed 'of to great advantage?' That my father ſhould take this night of all others to aſk me ſuch a queſtion, confounded me. I believe I ſtared at him wildly, as if I was ſure he had penetrated my

deſign. 'I own,' continued he, taking no notice either of my looks or ſilence, 'that 'it is myſterious; but, when I tell you 'that the cheſt contains a ſecret, the re-'vealing of which may be fatal to me, I 'am ſure you will not think me cruel in 'perſevering in the myſtery till I have 'fully matured the ſecret for your know-'ledge; and, therefore, I ſhall only ſay 'at preſent, that all the contents of the 'cheſt are for your wife, let her be 'whom ſhe may!' What a juncture for ſuch a converſation! The ambiguity of the language kept my mind upon the rack; and, while it laſted, I was either dumb or incoherent. My father perceived the ſtate I was in, but pretended to paſs it unobſerved; and, changing the converſation, managed to put me more at my eaſe before we retired.

"In bidding me good-night, I thought he did it with a peculiar emphaſis; but I again

I again aſcribed my perceptions to the ſuſpicions of conſcience. I ſhall never forget the war of emotions that raged in my mind when I was alone. The doubt of my father's knowledge of my marriage, his kindneſs, his dejection, his myſtery, his ſecret, all raiſed a hoſt of feelings to form ramparts of virtue around the cheſt; and, at firſt, I believed them impregnable. I reſolved to relinquiſh the deſign. I locked up the falſe key and counters in my deſk, I undreſſed, lighted my lamp, put out my taper, went into bed, and ſhut my eyes. I ſoon, however, found that ſleep was out of the queſtion: the remembrance of my father's converſation by degrees faded away, and gave place to that of Donna Seraphina. The latter part of it revived in my imagination with double force, and brought with it an irreſiſtible aſſemblage of charms: the ramparts fell

before them one after another. I argued that my marriage muſt be unknown to my father, as he would not have continued to hoard his treaſure had he been apprized of it; his kindneſs was a pledge of his forgiveneſs if he diſcovered me; his dejection I had obſerved upon my arrival: whatever his myſtery conſiſted in ſhould remain unexplored, and his ſecret ſhould be reſpected; for I would do nothing more than change the moidores of two bags for counters, and that with an expedition that ſhould not give me time to obſerve any thing beſides in the cheſt. Thus were the fortifications deſtroyed; but not without a ſtruggle, nor till Donna Seraphina's image had ſo renewed my intoxication that I would have ſacrificed my life for her.

"The cheſt ſtood in a large light cloſet, ſituated between my father's room and that which I occupied, having a door

door into each: in this closet he wrote and kept his papers. A common brown wainscot separated it from either room. I rose gently and threw my wrapping gown about me. As I lighted my taper, the clock of the neighbouring convent struck three: the sound of the first stroke so startled me that I had nearly put out both the taper and lamp. The tremor it produced continued upon me; I shook every limb. On opening the door of my chamber which communicated with the closet, I perceived that my father's door stood ajar: I listened, and heard him distinctly breathe, as if he were in a sound sleep. Having taken the key and the counters from my desk, I tottered slowly and barefoot into the closet. I advanced to the chest, and, setting my taper down on a chair that stood by it, I attempted to apply the key, but was some moments before I could collect

a ſufficient degree of ſteadineſs in my hand to ſucceed. At length I fixed it, and, turning it as ſoftly as I could, raiſed the ponderous lid. Gueſs my ſurpriſe when I found that the treaſure I wanted was ſecured by a ſecond maſſy door. My ſurpriſe was momentary; it yielded to a guilty joy, on ſeeing the key lying on it. To the key was tied a broad label, which I no ſooner took up than theſe words ſtruck my eyes: *Charles, I pity you! The contents of this cheſt are now all your own! the robbery you intended is converted into legal poſſeſſion by my death! Look round!* I ſtood bent and aghaſt; Seraphina and all her charms vaniſhed; horror took poſſeſſion of my ſoul. "Look round!" thundered through my ear, in my father's voice, from a corner of the room. I involuntarily obeyed, and, as my eye caught his figure at his chamber-door, he raiſed a vial to his mouth. Wild as

I was,

I was, his purpoſe flaſhed upon my thought, and I made a ſpring to daſh the poiſon from his lips; but, inſtead of effecting my deſign, I fell ſenſeleſs at his feet.

" When I recovered my recollection, I found that my father had locked the cheſt, and was ſitting near me with the two keys in his hand. ' Riſe, Charles,' ſaid he; ' I have no time to loſe.' I roſe as quickly as I could, and ſtaggered to my own door. ' Where are you ' going?' cried he.—' For medical aſ- ' ſiſtance,' I replied as diſtinctly as I could.—' Come back,' ſaid he; ' do ' not force me to anticipate the effects ' of the draught by ſpeedier means.'— ' To curſe me thus! Sir,' cried I.— ' It is to prevent your thinking ſo, ' Charles, that I detain you,' ſaid he, mildly. ' No, my ſon, you are not to ' blame; you are not the cauſe of my

'death. I meant that the mode of it 'should alarm you; for I found you plunging into guilt: consider it, therefore, as 'a blessing; let it impress on your soul 'indelible resolutions never to be induced by any temptation to deviate 'a hair's breadth from the line of rectitude. I have long resolved on this 'action, for reasons of which I have 'left an account in my desk: this is the 'key; you will find it in a cover, 'directed to yourself. Meanwhile take 'my blessing, and give me your forgiveness before-hand, for the confession you 'will find there; as I forgive you for 'your clandestine marriage, and for the 'weakness that yielded to the allurements 'of artful beauty.'—'Oh, my father!' cried I, distractedly, 'live, I beseech 'you, if possible: suffer me, oh suffer 'me to call in assistance, and to bring 'my sister and Smyth; there is yet 'time.'

'time.'—'Charles,' said my father, relenting, 'I almost wish there were; for, as 'I begin to feel the power of the potion '—its operation will be speedy—some-'thing here,' said he, striking his breast, 'tells me I have committed a dreadful 'crime. I took much pains to satisfy 'my reason; but a more powerful fa-'culty now applies to be satisfied: your 'distress agitates me, and has awakened 'conscience. Oh! that I had conti-'nued to suffer the pangs of remorse, 'and left my fate with Him whose will 'it was that I should act my part on this 'stage of existence! Let me, Charles, 'have the satisfaction to believe that 'the horror I confess has seized me for 'this crime, may have the effect of se-'curing you from it: swear to me, that 'nothing on earth, no passion, no men-'tal torture, shall have power to insti-'gate you to such a deed: this use of

'my

'my crime may, perhaps, assist in its 'atonement. Swear!'—'I do, my 'father—but is it indeed too late?'—'Be assured it is; let us endeavour 'to be composed: come with me into 'my chamber.'—'Will you not see 'my sister?'—'No; I must spare her.' 'Nor Smyth?'—'Smyth!' cried he, with a look of indignation; 'Smyth is 'a consummate villain. Unhappily he 'is married to your sister, whom you 'cannot forsake; but guard yourself 'against him, as you would against the 'Devil. Foul falsehood, hypocrisy, 'treachery, have the united dominion 'of his black heart. It was he betrayed 'you to me: you will find his scrawl in 'my desk. He has disguised his hand; 'but, unperceived, I myself saw him 'yesterday deposit the letter on my 'table. It communicates your mar-'riage, and the design to which you

'were

'were urged by Donna Seraphina.'—I was too much confounded to ſpeak.—'But come, my ſon, be firm, and attend like a man to the office that now 'remains to be performed. I have, 'perhaps, an hour or more to live: 'liſten to my laſt requeſt. The venom 'that is now beginning to circulate in 'my veins, I know, from ſeeing it tried 'by the vender, a Neopolitan doctor, 'on a ſpaniel, will terminate life with 'little pain, and no appearance of violence. As you regard my bleſſing, as 'you regard your own peace and that 'of your ſiſter, take advantage of this 'circumſtance to let the effect appear 'accidental.'

"The amazement which had bewildered my ſenſes having ſubſided a little, my ſenſibility increaſed; I kiſſed my father's hand, and ſhed a ſhower of tears upon it. 'Now,' continued he, 'I 'think

'think the horror of my mind would be 'relieved, if I could receive the bleſſed 'communion; and He, who knows the 'ſincerity of my repentance, may look 'down with compaſſion on the laſt act of 'my life, and ſuffer it to be weighed 'againſt the guilt of ſuicide. Call up the 'ſervants; let them believe me ſuddenly 'taken ill; and diſpatch one of them for 'the chaplain of the factory.' I hurried on my clothes and obeyed; and, in the mean time, my father went into bed. You will better conceive than I ſhould paint the remainder of this ſcene; nor will I lengthen the account of it. Not only the chaplain, but the doctor came. The latter felt his pulſe, put his queſtions, and knew not what to make of the caſe; but, at all events, preſcribed an emetic. At the word emetic, I felt a hope revive; I thought it an interpoſition of Providence, and I haſtened the doctor

doctor away to ſend the medicine. The chaplain now adminiſtered the ſacrament: I knelt by the bed-ſide, repenting my folly, forming reſolutions, and conſecrating my future life to virtue and religion; yet while, at my father's deſire, I participated the communion with him, one of the moſt unchriſtian paſſions, REVENGE, lurked at my heart. All my better reſolutions were ſtill accompanied with the thoughts of wreaking my vengeance upon Smyth; and I believe that the contemplation of it mixing with my diſtreſs, enabled me to ſupport myſelf through it. The crime of harbouring ſuch a paſſion, at the moment I was uniting in the moſt ſolemn act, in remembrance of Him whoſe life and precepts ſo fully inculcated its diabolical nature, never occurred to me. At the concluſion of the ſervice, my father preſſed my hand faintly, and ſaying in a

feeble

feeble tone, 'I am happier than I was,' expired."

Mr. Cowper being here very much affected, ceaſed ſpeaking, and Arthur brought him a glaſs of water; but not a word was ſaid by any of the party; even Arthur-William was too much awed to break the ſilence of Mr. Cowper's pauſe.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XXIII.

Continuation of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory.

THE ſympathy of the party relieved the mind of Mr. Cowper, who, pleaſed with the feelings he had excited, reſumed his narrative with confidence. "Conceive," ſaid he, "the ſtate of my mind during the remaining hours of the night, or rather of the morning, afflicted as I was by the loſs of my father, and oppreſſed by the horrible ſecret which he had charged me to keep, and which my reaſon told me it would be wickedneſs and madneſs to reveal. The horror I felt was conſiderably ſuſpended by my meditating on the ſignal vengeance I meant to take on Smyth, and by conſidering the imbe-

imbecility as well as villainy of his conduct; for I knew not how the wretch could for a moment imagine that it was poſſible for him to remain undetected, or eſcape my reſentment. Alas! the ſequel has proved how little I conceived the depth of his arts.

"Diſtracted by the events of the night, and agitated by a violent deſire of revenge, I reſolved not to delay it: I had no compunction on the ſcore of his being my ſiſter's huſband; for, in the exceſs of my rage, I thought to rid her of ſuch a ſerpent was to ſerve her, and, before it was light, I wrote a note to him, in which I ſaid nothing more than that he was a villain, and that I ſhould expect to meet him in an hour at the Torro de Marca. I diſpatched it as ſoon as it was day by a ſervant, whom I charged to call up Mr. Smyth, and to deliver it into his own hands. While the

the ſervant was gone, I finiſhed a letter to my ſiſter, to be given to her in the courſe of the morning, in which I begged her to be reſigned, to perform the laſt offices to my father, to make uſe of the contents of his cheſt; to ſettle his affairs, and to act with reſpect to herſelf with prudence, and according to the event of my meeting with Smyth. I was cloſing it when the ſervant returned with my challenge, and a meſſage that Mr. Smyth had not been at home all night, but was expected back to dinner that day.

"As my paſſion was not abated, I felt exceedingly chagrined and irritated; but, throwing the note into my father's deſk, I took up the paper directed to me, and examined its contents. I will not loſe time in repeating them at large to you: they were the principal events of his life, with the motives of his conduct,

duct, and apologies to me and my ſiſter for the error he had fallen into in his mode of treating us. His expences had always far exceeded his income, and, for ſome years paſt, he had been abſolutely living on his principal, which was nearly at an end. His grand object was, that my ſiſter and I ſhould marry well; and he believed, for the paper was written previous to his knowledge of Smyth's villainy, that he had obtained his deſire ſo far as it reſpected her. As he found his money ſinking, he reſolved to leave England, and to endeavour to make amends for his former imprudence, by throwing part of what remained into trade; and, being in great friendſhip with a gentleman of the name of Horton, ſettled at Oporto, had gone thither on purpoſe for his advice and aſſiſtance. He had, however, formed no connexion before my arrival, nor did he after-

afterwards: at the time of his death, his whole fortune was in his cheſt; nor would it have been inconſiderable to have judged by the appearance of the bags, large and ſmall, heaped end-ways one upon another; and it was for the ſake of this appearance that he uſed occaſionally to go to the cheſt before his friends; but very few of the bags contained money. Thus, in addition to the diſcovery of the treachery of a pretended friend, and the arts of a mercenary miſtreſs, the loſs of my father diſcloſed to me the ruin of his fortune, and my reduction to poverty.

"The ſtate of my mind was dreadful, and I in vain endeavoured to compoſe my ſpirits. As the morning advanced, I conſidered it as now uſeleſs, and indeed impoſſible, to conceal my father's death from my ſiſter till my meeting with Smyth; and hoping for myſelf ſome

ſome eaſe from her ſympathy, I ſent for her. She was both ſurpriſed and affected at the event; but I left her ignorant of the truth for ſome time, as I had ſcarcely courage myſelf to reflect upon it. I made no ſcruple, however, of revealing to her the inſolvent ſtate of my father's affairs, the manner in which Donna Seraphina had practiſed on my heart, and the intention I had had of ſupplying her from my father's cheſt; but, not to wound her abruptly, I avoided at firſt ſpeaking of Smyth.

" Having liſtened to me with great attention, ſhe caſt up her eyes and hands to Heaven, burſt into a freſh flood of tears, and fell upon my neck. When her emotion ſuffered her to ſpeak, ſhe ſaid: ' Oh, Charles! I feel for your ' ſituation, and for the ſtate in which ' your mind muſt be: Would to Hea- ' ven! I could conſole you; but, alas!

' my

'my brother, it is my fate to increaſe 'your miſery.'—'I fear, Harriet,' ſaid I, 'that your marriage has not borne the 'teſt of time; that all its promiſed hap-'pineſs has been conſumed in a honey-'moon.'—'Your fears,' replied ſhe, 'are but too juſt. I have more than 'once had thoughts of throwing my-'ſelf on my father's protection, and 'requeſting him to effect a ſeparation 'from the brute to whom I am unfor-'tunately bound. The occurrences of 'yeſterday evening had fully determined 'me to delay it no longer; but what will 'become of me now, Heaven only 'knows! Now that you are deſtitute, 'what hope can there be for me! 'Smyth's brutality will be increaſed too 'by finding that I have no fortune; for 'he has more than once made it the 'ſubject of ſarcaſm and abuſive lan-'guage. You, my dear brother, igno-

'rantly, have been more than once the 'cauſe of his treating me ill. When 'to you the hypocrite ſmiled and lent 'the ſums you borrowed, to me he 'preſerved not the maſk; he dared to 'abuſe both you and my father, pre-'judged our ruinous ſtate, and laviſhed 'on me all the rancour an inveterate, 'malignant heart could ſuggeſt. I 'wiſhed to have ſpoken to you before 'your laſt application to him; but your 'engagement with Donna Seraphina pre-'vented me, and it was made before I 'ſaw you again. On hearing, which I 'immediately did, of its being unſuc-'ceſsful, I thought it needleſs to make 'you uneaſy.'—'But, Harriet,' ſaid I, 'was this friendly? was this like a ſiſ-'ter? to leave me in the dark, the fool 'of ſuch a villain?'—'My dear brother,' replied ſhe, 'you know him not; he is 'the Devil himſelf in the ſhape of man.

'I obeyed

'I obeyed him through dread: I firmly 'believe that neither your life nor mine 'would be ſafe, were he to imagine that 'I have expoſed his character to you. 'Laſt night, after your converſation with 'him in the carriage at our door, a 'dreadful ſcene took place between us. 'Oh, ſuch expreſſions! Where could a 'man find ſuch language! But the bit-'terneſs of words were not all; he 'ſtruck me violently!"

Mr. Cowper's emotions at the time his ſiſter ſpoke, could hardly have been more violent than were thoſe of Arthur, at his recital of the fact. "Struck her!" cried he, ſtarting up: "ſtrike a woman! "what a ſcoundrel!"—"Be moderate, "my dear Arthur," ſaid Aubrey, "there "are many brutes in the human form "treading the ſurface of the globe."— "Brutes! ſir," replied Arthur; "ſay "devils."—"Smyth, as my ſiſter ob-

ſerved, was certainly one," ſaid Cowper. "To Arthur's indignation add the horror of my mind, and the rage excited by the recency of the fact related by a ſiſter in tears, and gueſs the ſtorm that agitated my ſoul. At one moment, I gave vent to it in bitter epithets; at another, I reſtrained myſelf, by reflecting how near vengeance was at hand; and to ſoothe my ſiſter, who was extremely alarmed at the paſſion to which I had given way, I appeared to yield to her perſuaſions and arguments. I will not here dwell minutely on the circumſtances my ſiſter communicated to me; ſuffice it to ſay, that Smyth's paſſion for her abated by degrees, and that at laſt he diſcovered himſelf to be the worſt of barbarians; the rancour of his ſpirit extended even to his child, whom, to increaſe her torments, he daſhed from her arms with violence, and loaded with curſes.

curſes. You wonder that ſhe concealed his treatment of her: Harriet was timid, and the wretch threatened her with the moſt horrid conſequences if ever the real ſtate of the life they led were known. Her knowledge of his hypocriſy, while it ſurpriſed and diſguſted her, galled him to the ſoul; for he could not bear the conſciouſneſs of there being an eye that obſerved the double part he played."—"I ſuppoſe," cried Arthur-William, "that he did not think that "God ſaw it too."—"Indeed, my dear "boy," ſaid Mr. Cowper, "he did not. The wicked mind only the eyes of men: as God is inviſible, they forget that he is preſent.

"After parting with me in the carriage at his own door, Smyth went into his houſe, abuſed, and beat his wife; firſt reviled me, then ſaid I was to dine with him next day, and ordered her to

prepare a dinner. He told her that he ſhould go and paſs the night at the *quinta* of one of his Portugueſe acquaintance, but ſhould return to keep his appointment next day; and commanded her, as ſhe valued her life and mine, to ſupport the maſk he choſe ſhe ſhould wear. It was, however, no longer ſupportable, and ſhe had determined to throw it off that very day. Harriet, aware of the conſequences, urged me with prayers, arguments, and tears, not to act raſhly, but to take time to conſider what was to be done both for her and myſelf: and, to relieve her diſtraction, I ſeemed to agree that it would be better to poſtpone an explanation with her huſband. She ſtaid with me all the morning, but went home a little before the hour ſhe expected him back, in order to inform him of my father's death, and of my inability to leave the houſe.

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" She was no ſooner gone, than I again gave my challenge to the man who had carried it before, enjoining him to watch Smyth's return, and to put it into his hands, if poſſible, before he entered his houſe. I had no time to examine the money-cheſt, and was too agitated to give directions about my father's funeral, which I entirely truſted to my ſiſter; and which, as he was not a catholic, it was neceſſary to conduct as privately as poſſible. I continued an hour pacing my chamber, in expectation of an anſwer from Smyth. Though my revenge on him chiefly occupied my mind, thoughts of Donna Seraphina combined to feed the fire that raged within me. I no longer beheld in her the angel that had charmed me, but the mercenary tool and accomplice of the villain who had detained me from my Fanny, abuſed my inexperienced heart, and

blaſted my virtue. Another hour paſſed without tidings of my meſſenger, for whoſe return I became more and more impatient. Hour after hour elapſed, and the day began to cloſe, when I ſaw him croſs the court-yard with a letter in his hand, which I doubted not was the reply I wanted; but, ſoon entering my chamber, he delivered back the one he had received from me, informing me at the ſame time, that my ſiſter was very uneaſy at Mr. Smyth's delay. Unable to account for it myſelf, and not conceiving him ſo low-minded as to deſcend to the petty inſolence of leaving me to wait his appointment at dinner, which he never meant to keep, I muffled myſelf up in a cloke, under which I concealed my ſword and piſtols, and, taking advantage of the duſk, hurried to his houſe. Depoſiting my arms and cloke in an outer room, I went to my ſiſter, whom

whom I found in tears over Edmund. I endeavoured awkwardly to conſole her, while the advance of night increaſed her alarm. Finding, on inquiry, that both his French ſervants had attended him, I began to ſuſpect that he meant to complete his villainy by deſerting his wife and child. This apprehenſion abating the fury of revenge, by which for many hours I had been blinded, the folly of my putting him to death ruſhed upon my mind, and I ſaw at once the calamities to which I ſhould have expoſed my ſiſter, totally unacquainted as we were with Smyth's affairs, which I did not doubt were ſo arranged as to deprive her of all hope of a reſource from them. So inconſiſtent are the paſſions, that the meeting I ardently deſired but a few minutes before for an opportunity to cut his throat, I now as anxiouſly wiſhed, for the purpoſe of aſſuring myſelf that my

ſiſter would not loſe the advantage of his life, as he might be compelled in England to ſupport her in a ſtate of ſeparation.

" We continued in this painful ſtate of ſuſpence till between nine and ten o'clock at night, when I determined to go and make an inquiry at the inn where he generally hired horſes. There every doubt was ſoon removed: I ſaw the man who had driven his carriage to the firſt ſtage on the north road, where he had immediately taken freſh horſes for Braga; and, making both the Frenchmen get into the carriage with him, determined to travel all night."—" Good " Heaven!" exclaimed Mrs. Aubrey, " what a thorough villain!"—" This confirmation of my ſuſpicion," proceeded Mr. Cowper, " came like a thunderbolt upon me, and almoſt deprived me of my ſenſes. My poor ſiſter bore

bore it with more reſignation than I expected, and indeed better than I did. We ſearched every place in the houſe, in hopes of finding a letter from him: not a word did he leave either in writing or by meſſage. The ſervants were as much ſurpriſed at the event as their miſtreſs. He had not only carried off his clothes, but every thing of value belonging to him, leaving only what was hired. After ſitting ſome time longer with my ſiſter, I adviſed her to remain in the houſe till I had conſidered what was to be done; and, obtaining her promiſe to endeavour to compoſe herſelf and be reſigned, I again wrapped myſelf up as before in my cloke, and returned home, where I wrote a few lines to Mr. Horton, the friend I mentioned, urging him to come to me early next morning, as it was my intention to conſult him in the

dilemma in which both my ſiſter and I ſo unexpectedly found ourſelves.

" Exhauſted by the agitation I had ſuffered without remiſſion for ſo many hours, together with the want of ſleep, I was unable to ſit up any longer, and, throwing off my clothes, I went to bed. I ſlept, but it was in a very diſturbed manner; my agitation was continued in dreams, and I awoke next morning in a fever. Mr. Horton was in the houſe, and came to my bedſide; but, finding that I ſpoke incoherently, he adviſed me to keep myſelf quiet, and to ſee a phyſician. From this time I recollect nothing that happened for ten days, when the criſis of the fever terminating in my favour, my delirium abated, and I found my ſiſter performing the part of a nurſe to me. When I was ſufficiently recovered to converſe without danger, ſhe informed me that my father was buried

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on the ſecond day after I was taken ill, and that his funeral was attended by Mr. Horton and moſt of the gentlemen of the factory; that Smyth had drawn every ſhilling out of the hands of his merchant, and had been heard of at Corunna, where he had embarked in a veſſel for Bordeaux; that he had, however, paid all his debts at Oporto, with the rent of the houſe he occupied for the month entered upon; that ſhe had given it up to the landlord, and had come immediately to me. She told me likewiſe that Donna Seraphina had ſet out with Don Alvarez de Monocella the day after my father's death for Del Pueblo, without fixing any time for their return to Oporto.

" My recovery was conſiderably retarded by the pangs I felt on account of my conduct to Fanny: I confeſſed my folly and wickedneſs to Harriet, and formed

formed a thouſand reſolutions of atonement. The bitterneſs of ſelf-reproach was ſoftened by the friendly, affectionate arguments of my ſiſter; and I began to flatter myſelf that my lovely, innocent Fanny would think and ſpeak in the ſame manner. My pure paſſion for her again took poſſeſſion of my heart with redoubled force; I longed to be once more at Eden-bower, to obtain her pardon on my knees, and to embrace the little pledges of our love, one of whom only I had ſeen. Theſe happy anticipations were interrupted by reflexions on the ſilence of my wife, whoſe correſpondence had ceaſed for a long time; nor were the fears it created, now to be removed or leſſened by the blind devotion of my heart to an unworthy object. Sometimes a dread of the worſt would ſeize my ſoul, and I became frantic at the thought. Neither Harriet nor I had

had any further ties to bind us to Oporto; and, being reſolved to quit it as ſoon as poſſible, every day appeared an age that deferred the bliſs I by turns painted to my fancy as reſerved for me at Eden-bower. As ſoon, therefore, as I was able to undertake buſineſs, I entered into a thorough examination of my affairs, which I found to be in a very deplorable ſtate. All the money left by my father was not enough to diſcharge the remaining debts; and I ſhould not have been able to leave Oporto but for the generoſity of his friend, Mr. Horton, to whom I fully communicated my ſituation, not omitting my marriage, and the little ſettlement I had made on Fanny and her children. The worthy man propoſed to arrange and ſettle every thing for me at Oporto, to advance me a ſum of money ſufficient to carry my ſiſter and myſelf

to

to England, and to take my bond for the amount, which he kindly ſaid he had not a doubt I ſhould in a little time be able to pay. He was ſcandalized at the conduct of Smyth, but imagined, as he was a man of ſuch fortune, that, by a mere application to his banker, I ſhould find him when he returned to England, and be able to obtain a proviſion for his wife and child; for which purpoſe he adviſed that my ſiſter ſhould carry home the certificate of her marriage, with additional atteſtations. This advice of courſe ſhe followed. I executed a bond for five hundred pounds ſterling to the generous Horton, of whom we took an affectionate leave; and, having engaged a paſſage in a ſhip bound to Briſtol, having obtained a memorandum from Smyth's merchant of the names of the bankers in London who had given his credit, names of the firſt re-

ſpectability, and having taken leave of all from whom I had received civilities, I embarked with my ſiſter and Edmund; my heart divided between regrets for the ſhameful life I had ſpent at Oporto, and hopes of a virtuous and happy one at Melford.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Continuation of Mr. Cowper's Hiſtory.

Mr. Cowper's ſtory proving longer than he ſuſpected it would, he again apologized for the circumſtantial manner into which he was led by his feelings, and propoſed to defer the reſt of it; but againſt this the party unanimouſly declared, and he proceeded thus:

"During the paſſage my ſiſter and I mutually conſoled each other, and laid plans for the future. To me the moſt pleaſing of our converſations were thoſe of which Fanny was the ſubject: my paſſion ſeemed to increaſe as I approached nearer to its object; and, ſuffering my ear to be beguiled by the friendly

friendly effuſions of my ſiſter's affection, I loſt ſight of my crimes, and yielded my ſoul entirely to the delightful hope of being happy with my Fanny. For many days before we landed I thought of nothing but her; I continually painted her to my imagination in all her charms of mind and perſon, and I defied the malice of fortune. With what pleaſure did I again behold the ſhores of Old England; and how did it increaſe as the rich fields of Devon and Somerſetſhire ſeemed to dart paſt the ſhip as ſhe ſteered with a fair wind for the mouth of the Avon, into which we found the tide pouring rapidly! Without delay we entered the river. How ſweetly did I recognize the well known objects of its romantic banks, where I had ſpent many a happy hour with my Fanny! As we paſſed the Hot-wells, my eyes eagerly examined every face upon the walk,

walk, as if they expected to meet hers; and, when I reflected that she might have been there, had I given her notice of my sailing, I reproached myself for the loss of the hours that were to intervene between that moment and my arrival at Eden-bower. While at a distance, I had been too busy in painting the happiness of home, to think of bringing her from it; but I repented the blindness of my avarice of joy, when my senses convinced me that we might have met sooner. I consoled myself, however, with the thought of having her in my arms, and pressing her to my bosom, before the day was over; and I determined now to enjoy the concealment of my return from every creature, till I knocked at my cottage and imparted it to Fanny herself.

"At Bristol I carried my sister to an inn, where, seeing her and Edmund well accom-

accommodated, I left her to take charge of our baggage; and, promising to return to her next day with Fanny, set out at two o'clock in a post-chaise for Thornbury. I had now been absent more than a year; but every hedge, every tree, every house, recalled the past events of my life, and blended them with the present hour: I felt as if I had seen all the objects that presented themselves only the day before; but my impatience to behold my Fanny seemed to increase the distance from one milestone to another, and, though the post-boy drove rapidly, I thought him long upon the road. I met many persons whose faces were familiar to me; and, notwithstanding my resolution to conceal myself, I could not help giving them a cordial nod as I passed; for they were the animated memorials of happy days. Sometimes I continued for many minutes

nutes abſorbed in contraſting the delight of an innocent paſſion with the horror of a guilty one; at others, in figuring my reception at Eden-bower: now I made ſpeeches for Fanny, and now I proteſted my love with all the original ardour of my heart.

" Theſe reveries laſted till the chaiſe was near Thornbury, when I ſtopped the poſt-boy to deſire him to drive through a lane, by which he might avoid the town, and to put me down at the ſtile which led over the fields to Melford. When he ſtopped oppoſite to it, and opened the chaiſe-door, my mind and feelings were ſo occupied by the recollections it awakened, that I could hardly give the little attention that was neceſſary to ſettle with him. By the warmth of the poſt-boy's thanks, I imagine I greatly overpaid him: but I was ſitting on the ſtile where I ſaw Fanny come

come from the oppoſite one with her wooden bowl and bottle of water, her white towel and piece of ſoap: where ſhe firſt perceived that my arm was broke, ſhed tears, and bleſſed me. I ſat no longer, however, than while I took out my purſe and diſcharged the chaiſe. I now trod the foot-path where I ſaw her inſulted, where ſhe caught me by the arm, and beſought my protection; where I fought her battle, and loſt my Virgil; where I firſt admired her beauty and the native grace of her virtuous emotions, while the features of her face and the poſture of her perſon were governed by gratitude mingling with ſelf-reproach. With the loſs of my Virgil I aſſociated the finding of it, the artleſs confeſſion of my Fanny's love, her exclamation of 'What! your virtuous wife!' the firſt kiſs I ſtole; and one happy idea uſhering in another, my imagination had proceeded

ceeded to the wedding-day, the whole village decked in white and gay clothes, following us to the altar, when I was ſuddenly rouſed from my rapturous trance by the ſound of the village church-bell.

" The air was ſtill, the ſky ſerene; it was a Sabbath evening in the middle of June: I was riſing the ſlope, at the top of which the view of the village opens on the ſight. I now wondered that I had met none of the villagers ſtrolling: the thought oppreſſed my mind; and the melancholy, ſolemn ſound of the bell, which I ſoon perceived was tolling the forſaken frame of ſome departed ſpirit to its grave, inſpired a gloom, which I endeavoured in vain to diſperſe by thinking of joy and Fanny. Reaching the ſummit of the aſcent, I ſaw the vivid images of my wedding ſcenes, which I had been ſo rapturouſly contemplating, com-

completely contrasted by a long procession of mourners, blockading the avenue to the church. All the inhabitants seemed to be gathered together: except in the line of this gloomy train, not a human creature was to be seen; and, though the trees and fields wore their finest verdure, a universal dulness pervaded the country; a general silence, like that of night, prevailed, rendered more awful by the solemn interruption of the loud, single sound of the funeral bell, returning on the ear after long and equal pauses. It was a scene to damp the most ardent joy. The contagion of sorrow seized my heart: the general affection, evidenced by the general attendance, showed the loss to be no common one; it might be the venerated Grey himself, whose soul had flown to Heaven. I was confirmed in this opinion by the full concourse of his parishioners. Sure of finding my Fanny

among them, I reſolved to join them. My clothes were indeed unſuitable to the occaſion; but, to the ſpirit of Grey, my heart would appear in mourning: yet even that could not be requiſite, for he was removed to a ſtate of ſainted bliſs. I might mourn juſtly for his flock, to whom he had been a true ſhepherd; but for him I ſhould rejoice. Dwelling on his general virtues, and recalling to mind his particular goodneſs to myſelf, I approached with double ſpeed. As the bier entered the weſtern door of the church, I was near enough to diſtinguiſh the faces of my friends; and, as I neither ſaw Fanny nor the Cowſels, I imagined they had already gone in. I flew to the ſmall door that opened into the ſouth aiſle: I there overtook a lad who knew me well; but, inſtead of replying to my queſtion reſpecting the perſon whoſe funeral it was, he ſtared at me

with

with ſurpriſe, and ran away to another door. His conduct alarmed me. I entered the church trembling. Grey himſelf was in the reading-deſk. My heart now palpitated violently: my eyes ſought Fanny every where; the people, crowding the pews, gazed at me with conſternation. I ſaw Cowſel, his ſon, and daughter, ſtanding on one ſide of the body, and Mrs. Grey with two ladies on the other; but I could ſee Fanny no where. The moſt horrid thought that could ariſe now took poſſeſſion of my brain. I forced my way to the bier: 'Where,' cried I, ſeizing Cowſel by the arm, 'where is Fanny?' He turned from me without a reply; and at that moment I heard Grey's voice raiſed to pronounce emphatically: *Thou haſt ſet our miſdeeds before thee; and our ſecret ſins in the light of thy countenance.* It ſpoke the truth to my frantic ſoul; and,

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at the ſame inſtant, I caſt my eyes on the plate of the coffin, which anſwered my inquiry; it anſwered me—*Here ſhe is; you ſhall behold her no more!* I remember that I graſped the coffin in my arms; I remember that I again heard the thunder of Grey's voice cry, 'Take 'that madman away:' I remember no more."

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

Printed by A. Strahan,
Printers-Street.